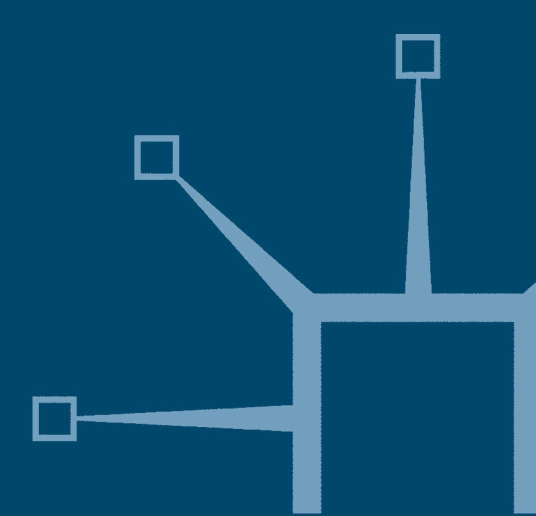
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Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury, Volume 1

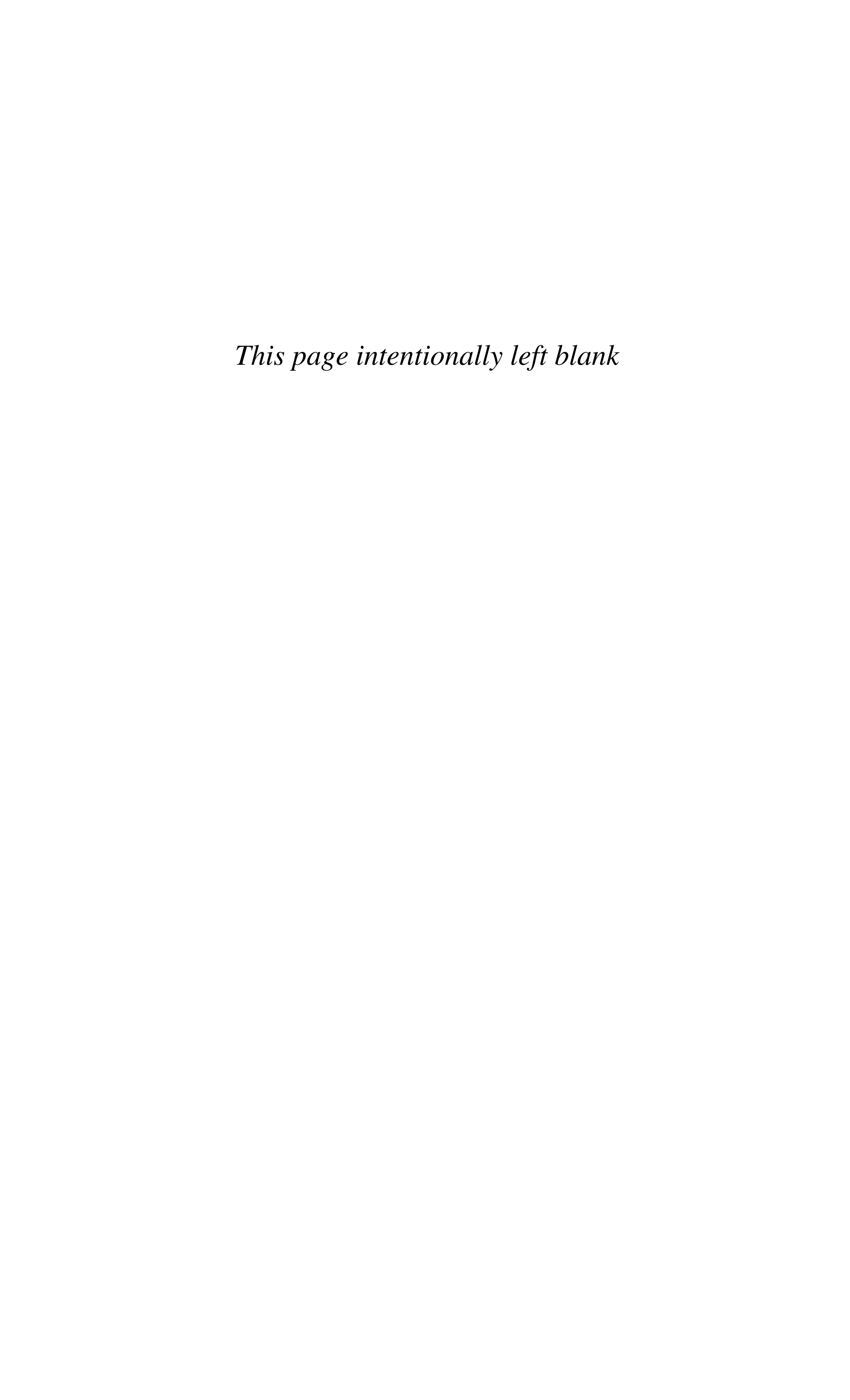
Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice

Edited by

Gina Potts and Lisa Shahriari



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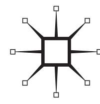
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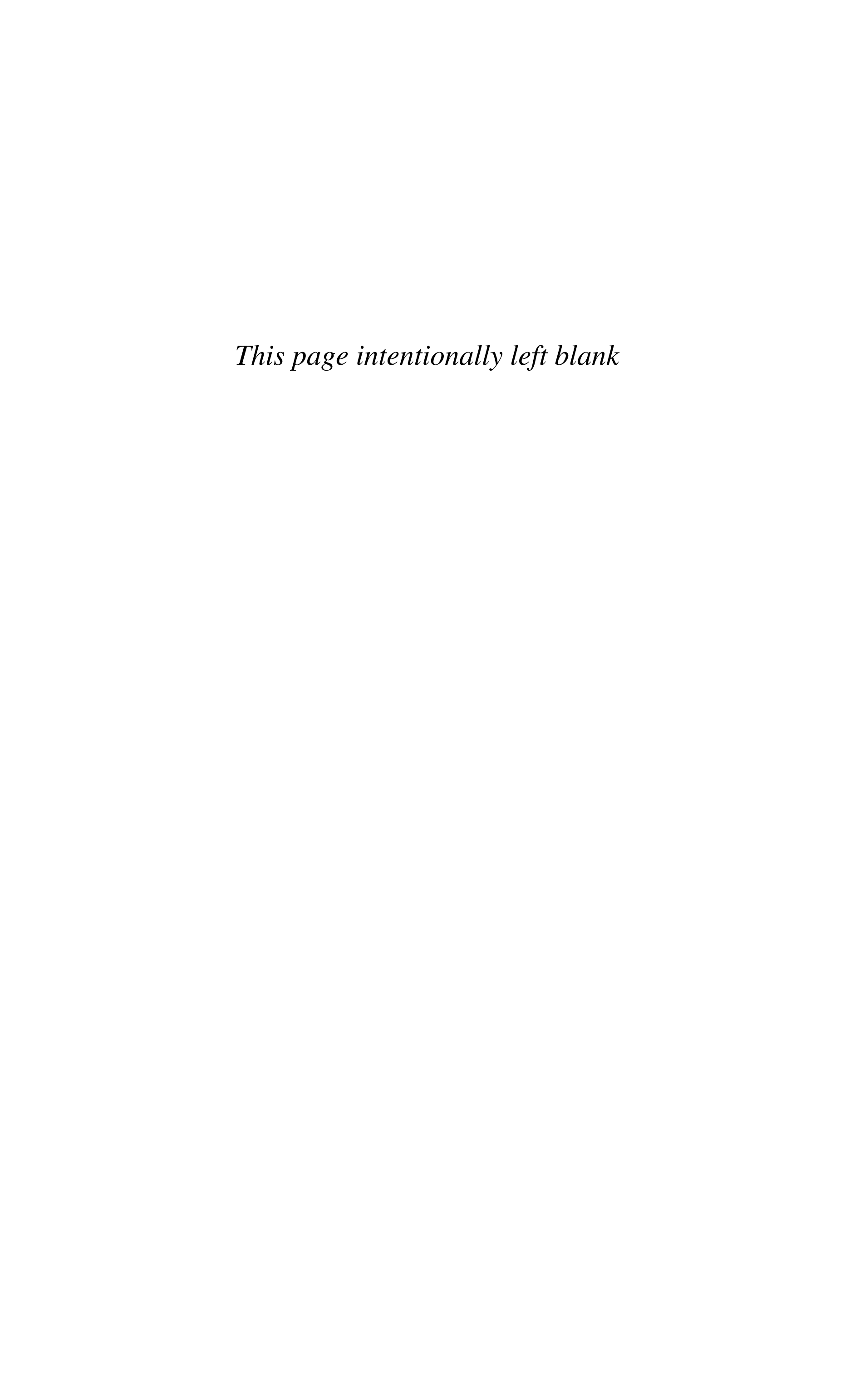
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Contents

Preface

Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury collects together scholarship from a range of perspectives, covering the broad areas of aesthetics in Volume 1 and politics in Volume 2. The work in these areas of Woolf studies, along with the intersections between them, reveals not only the development of Virginia Woolf as a writer and intellectual of her time, but also the influences on her work and the impact that her writing has had upon readers and other writers across the twentieth and early twenty-first century.

This volume, *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury: Aesthetic Theory and Literary Practice*, brings together new insights and scholarship on different aspects of Woolf's aesthetics and influences. Woolf's applications of her aesthetic approaches are revealed by tracing some of her early influences and exploring the relationships between her writing and different creative forms. It is not only the work and ideas of Woolf which are explored, but also those of her Bloomsbury contemporaries and others. The chapters in this volume illuminate the wide and continuing reverberations of Woolf's work, in relations to, for example, conceptions of women as intellectuals and writers; the implications of spaces and places; questions of identity and ideas of self; the roles of literary groups; and how Woolf's work has influenced understandings of writers from outside Woolf's own literary circle and cultural milieu. The significance of employing Woolf when studying the work of other writers is revealed not just by looking back to, but also beyond, Bloomsbury.

This volume opens by looking back to Bloomsbury with reminiscences by Cecil Woolf, the nephew of Leonard and Virginia Woolf. His affectionate personal reflections on his aunt and uncle offer a unique view of the couple from simple details of their day-to-day lives to the humorous wit, fertile imagination and occasionally cruel 'takings-off' of his aunt Virginia. Cecil Woolf also reveals how his aunt and uncle's work for the Hogarth Press influenced his decision to start his own publishing house, which is modelled on theirs. Taking forward the idea of returns, Suzanne Raitt's "The Voyage Back: Woolf's Revisions and Returns" discusses the implications of the revisions Woolf made to her novels and the significance of the returns to, and departures from, early drafts. Raitt argues that return, like revision, engages both memory and fantasy, hope and disappointment, even when the place one returns to is as familiar as one's own writing or one's own past.

In "'Young writers might do worse': Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Virginia Stephen and Virginia Woolf", Beth Rigel Daugherty looks back to Woolf's home-schooling, and the influences that her Aunt Anny had on her education and development as a woman writer. Daugherty traces the influences of Ritchie's biographical sketches and her writing for *Atalanta* ('a magazine for girls') and other publications, revealing striking links between some of Ritchie's work and Woolf's. This offers new insight into feminist understandings of the influences of Woolf's formative education and her subsequent profession as a woman writer and literary critic. In "Mapping the Ghostly City: Cambridge, *A Room of One's Own* and the University Novel", Anna Bogen explores further Woolf's relationship to education. Uncovering Woolf's complicated relationship to university women of her time, Bogen examines the reception of the lectures Woolf gave in Cambridge in 1929, which became *A Room of One's Own*; the popular genre of university fiction; and the implications of "Oxbridge" and London in Woolf's conceptualisations of the modern woman writer. Bogen argues that Woolf's grounding of creativity within London's urban environment is continually haunted by Cambridge and that the multi-dimensional vision of the city extends imaginative syntheses for women.

The significance of space and place in Woolf continues to be of importance to scholars of her work, and new insights continue to open up perspectives on the roles that space and place play in Woolf's writing. Morag Shiach's "London Rooms" addresses the material notion of rooms in Woolf's *London Scene* essays. Shiach identifies the rooms' multiple meanings – as social spaces, as sites of technological innovation, as part of the landscape of the familial and as the boundary of the self. Illuminating Woolf's lifelong relationship with London, Elisa Kay Sparks examines the various influences on Woolf's relationship to London in "Leonard and Virginia's London Library: Mapping London's Tides, Streams and Statues". By looking back to London guide books held in Leonard and Virginia Woolf's library, Sparks explores Virginia's particular understandings of and writings about London as a woman writer, and how the shapes and movements of London are written in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Sparks extends understandings of the city lore which lies behind the walks in *Mrs. Dalloway* by considering how much and what Virginia Woolf knew about London's history. Bringing together ideas of place and self, Caroline Marie investigates the ways that Woolf's attendance at dramatic performances in London influenced the writing of *Orlando*. In "Sense of Self and Sense of Place in *Orlando*: Virginia Woolf's Aesthetics of Pantomime", Marie argues that pantomime hinges on the transformation

scenes in *Orlando* and contributes to the novel's presentation of a world in flux and the self as a fluid entity.

Issues of memory, identity and relationships to one's environment are illuminated through psychoanalytic and related approaches to Woolf's work. In "'My own ghost met me': Woolf's 1930s Photographs, Death and Freud's Acropolis", Maggie Humm explores how Woolf's photographs function like Freud's visit to the Acropolis as a technology of memory. Examining the Woolfs' photographs and arrangements of photo albums, Humm identifies how the photographs incorporate traces of their makers' histories and represent conversations between past and present, thereby illuminating how Virginia Woolf progressively displaces her fears of death and of the symbolic father. Benjamin Harvey explores the psychological relationship to objects in "Woolf, Fry, and the Psycho-Aesthetics of Solidity", discussing Woolf and Bloomsbury's assimilation of aesthetic ideas associated with France, including the dialogic and social nature of art criticism, the mismatch between art and language and the emergence of 'solid' as an aesthetic concept. Through analyses of Woolf's writing, including the short story "Solid Objects" and the biography *Roger Fry*, and Fry's responses to Cezanne, Harvey raises questions about the aesthetics of solidity and the activity of collecting art objects. Christina Alt takes an original approach to the influences of the environment on Woolf's writing and the activity of collecting in "Virginia Woolf and Changing Conceptions of Nature". Alt considers the significance of Woolf's lepidopteran symbolism and illuminates how allusions to the butterfly's capture, collection, dispatch and display imply a critique of society's entrapment and exploitation of the individual. Alt argues that through her analogy of specimen collection and classification, Woolf condemned the reduction of individuals to narrow identities within fixed hierarchies.

Reaching beyond Bloomsbury, Kristen Czernecki and Makiko Minow-Pinkney reveal the wider reverberations of Woolf's influence when studying contemporaries of Woolf abroad. In "Comparative Modernism: The Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance", Czarnecki explores the parallel developments of Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group, and Zora Neale Hurston and the Harlem Renaissance. Whilst Woolf and Hurston never met, and the paths of Bloomsbury and Harlem did not cross, Czarnecki identifies the legacies of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance, and similarities between their dynamic and multifaceted histories. Czarnecki argues that understanding the two groups together, and the ways in which they challenged binaries within literary studies, may enable modernism to be reconceived. The volume

ends by voyaging out far beyond Bloomsbury to Japan, with Minow-Pinkney's "Sketches of Carlyle's House by Two Visitors, a Young Virginia Woolf and a Japanese Novelist, Sōseki Natsume". Minow-Pinkney examines the meditations on Carlyle's house by Woolf and Sōseki (a Japanese writer of the same age), tracing the parallel developments of these two young writers and the alternative forms of writing both sought at the early stages of their writing careers. Identifying the practices of sketching-writing in Woolf and Sōseki and the significance that early visits to Carlyle's house had on the two young writers, Minow-Pinkney illuminates the 'thetic' breaks of each, as well as considering how their peripheral positions – as a woman writer and a Japanese writer – are manifested in their specific modernist approaches. These and the others in this volume succeed in opening up new perspectives on Virginia Woolf and Bloomsbury, and testify to the wide-reaching influences of Woolf's work.

GINA POTTS
London

Acknowledgements

These volumes are not single, solitary births but the work of many people: our contributors, the staff at the Institute of English Studies which hosted 'Back to Bloomsbury: the Fourteenth Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', Dr Anna Snaith and Professor Maggie Humm whose experience and advice we drew upon, and our publisher Palgrave Macmillan. Thank you to them, and to the Trustees of the Literary Estate of Virginia Woolf for their guidance on quoting from the works of Virginia Woolf. We must also express our gratitude to Chris Hill and Robert Potts for their untiring patience and encouragement.

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Kristin Czarnecki is an Assistant Professor of English at Georgetown College, Kentucky. She teaches courses in modern British literature, transatlantic modernism, multiethnic American literature and first-year composition, among others, and has published essays on Virginia Woolf, Jean Rhys, Zora Neale Hurston and Louise Erdrich. Her essay "'Signs I Don't Understand': Language and Abjection in *Molloy*" appears in a special issue of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* (Vol. 17, 2008). Current projects and interests include Woolf and composition pedagogy and Kristevan readings of Jean Rhys.

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Maggie Humm is a Professor of Cultural Studies, University of East London. She has been a Distinguished Visiting Scholar and Professor at many universities including Massachusetts, San Diego State, Stanford, Rutgers, Queen's Belfast and Karachi. Recent publications include *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: the Private Lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (2006) and she is currently editing the *Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (forthcoming 2010).

Caroline Marie is Maître de Conférences at the Université Paris 8. She is currently studying the interplay between literature and the performing arts in Virginia Woolf's novels, essays and short fiction as well as in other twentieth-century authors.

Makiko Minow-Pinkney is Senior Lecturer in English at The University of Bolton. She is author of *Virginia Woolf and the Problem of the Subject: Feminine Writing in the Major Novels* (1987) and has written many other articles on Woolf.

Gina Potts completed her Ph.D. at Birkbeck, University of London in 2007. Her thesis, *Nomadic Subjects: the Writing of Virginia Woolf* examined the aesthetics and anti-essentialist politics of Woolf's writing from a Deleuzean perspective. Gina was co-organiser with Lisa Shahriari of 'Back to Bloomsbury: the 14th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', and is co-editor of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury* (2010).

Suzanne Raitt is Professor of English at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Her publications include *Virginia Woolf's "To the Lighthouse"* (1991), *Vita and Virginia* (1993) and *May Sinclair: A Modern Victorian* (2000). She is currently working on an edition of Woolf's *Orlando* for Cambridge University Press.

Beth Rigel Daugherty teaches English and Integrative Studies at Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio. She has published articles on Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, short stories and essays, co-edited the Modern Language Association volume on teaching *To the Lighthouse*, and is working on a book titled *The Education of a Woman Writer: Virginia Woolf's Apprenticeship*.

Lisa Shahriari received her Ph.D. in Literature from the University of Essex. Her thesis *"In her Nature or in her Sex": Virginia Woolf and the Politics of Difference* explored Woolf's subversion of contemporary notions of sexual difference. She was the reviewer of Woolf studies for the Year's Work in English Studies for work published 2004–2006. She is currently at work on a project examining prostitution and British women's intellectual lives. Lisa and Gina Potts organised 'Back to Bloomsbury: the 14th Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf', and are co-editors of *Virginia Woolf's Bloomsbury* (2010).

Morag Shiach is Professor of Cultural History in the School of English and Drama at Queen Mary, University of London, where she is also Vice-Principal. She has published extensively on the cultural history of modernism. Her publications include *The Cambridge Companion to the Modernist Novel* (2007) and *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood* (2004).

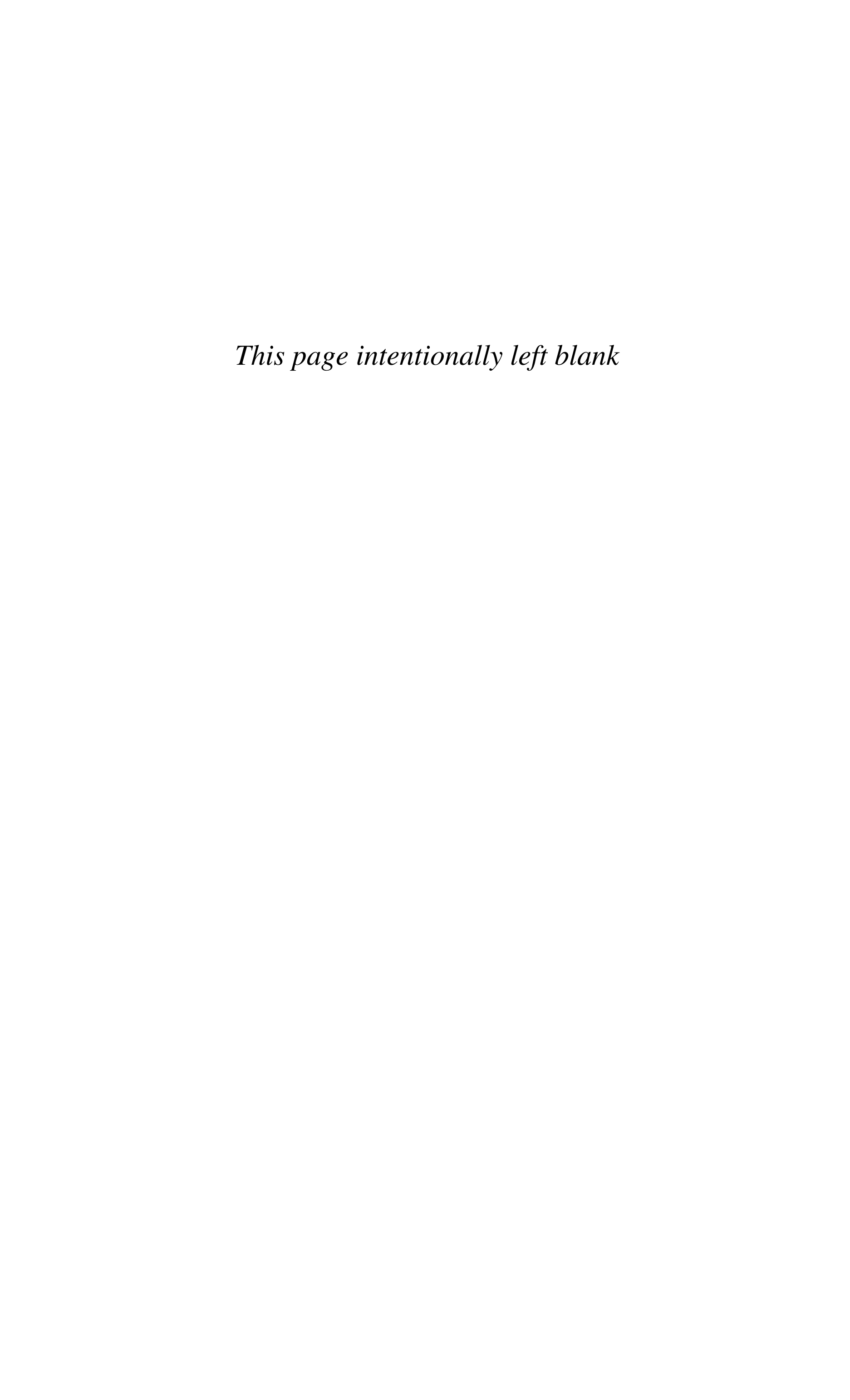
Elisa Kay Sparks is an Associate Professor of English and Director of the Women's Studies Program at Clemson University in South Carolina.

Her research and publications are focused on Woolf and gardens and the transatlantic connections between Virginia Woolf, the Bloomsbury group and Georgia O'Keeffe.

Cecil Woolf is the nephew of Leonard Woolf by Leonard's youngest brother, Philip. He was fourteen by the time his Aunt Virginia committed suicide in 1941 and had paid several visits to his uncle and aunt in the country and also in London, where he would stay at Tavistock Square. Following in the tradition of independent presses like the Hogarth Press, Cecil Woolf has run his own independent publishing house since 1960. Cecil Woolf Books have published, amongst many publications, the Bloomsbury Heritage monographs, which celebrate the life, works and times of the members of the Bloomsbury Group.

List of Abbreviations

*A*1–4	L. T. Meade, et al. (eds.), *Atalanta* (4 vols)
AROO	Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
BP	Virginia Woolf, *Books and Portraits*
*CE*1–4	Virginia Woolf, *Collected Essays* (4 vols)
CH	Virginia Woolf, *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches*
*CR*1–2	Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader* (2 vols)
CSF	Virginia Woolf, *Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*
CW	Virginia Woolf, *Contemporary Writers*
*D*1–5	Virginia Woolf, *The Diary of Virginia Woolf* (5 vols)
*E*1–4	Virginia Woolf, *The Essays of Virginia Woolf* (4 vols)
FW	Virginia Woolf, *Freshwater*
JR	Virginia Woolf, *Jacob's Room*
*L*1–6	Virginia Woolf, *The Letters of Virginia Woolf* (6 vols)
LS	Virginia Woolf, *The London Scene*
MB	Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being*
MD	Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
O	Virginia Woolf, *Orlando: A Biography*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
PA	Virginia Woolf, *A Passionate Apprentice*
"Portrait"	Virginia Woolf, "Portrait of a Londoner"
RF	Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography*
TG	Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*
TM	Virginia Woolf, *The Moment and Other Essays*
TTL	Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*
TTL Holograph	Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse: The original holograph draft*
TW	Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*
TY	Virginia Woolf, *The Years*
VO	Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out*
WF	Virginia Woolf, *Women and Fiction*
WS	Virginia Woolf, *Walter Sickert: A Conversation*



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1
Back to Bloomsbury

Cecil Woolf

The following is the keynote address given by Cecil Woolf, Virginia and Leonard Woolf's nephew, on the occasion of the opening of the 'Back to Bloomsbury' conference in London; this was the fourteenth annual Virginia Woolf conference, held on 23–26 June 2004 at the University of London in Bloomsbury. We are grateful to Cecil Woolf for allowing us to publish this piece as the opening to this collection of essays, all of which have grown out of presentations made at that conference.

Of the one or two questions in life that I prefer to duck, perhaps the most frequent comes from the daunting and amiable creature, the Bloomsbury enthusiast. What was she *like*? they ask.

In an essay on Dr Johnson's friend Mrs Hester Thrale – one of the last things she wrote – Virginia says 'The more we know of people, the less we can sum them up. Just as we think we hold the bird in our hand, the bird flutters off' (*CE*3, p. 158). You won't be surprised when I tell you that it never crossed my mind, all those years ago, that one day I should have to stand up in front of an illustrious audience, some of them 'Woolf specialists', and add my two cents worth to the Niagara of words about those pivotal members of Bloomsbury, Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

I wonder if, by an effort of imagination, we can go back mentally nearly seventy years to the late 1930s, the eve of the Second World War. Let us visit the small Sussex village of Rodmell where Leonard and Virginia had their country house. Most of the village consists of The Street, as it is called, which runs off the main Lewes–Newhaven road. On either side, The Street is lined with flint garden walls, behind which are cottages, most of which are inhabited by farm workers. This is a time before Rodmell, like so many such villages, became gentrified dormitories, whose residents commute daily to London. Then it had a Post Office, a general store, a blacksmiths and a pub. Only the pub has survived.

After a few minutes' walk we reach a long, two-storey clapboard house on the right which lies a few yards back from the road. Pushing open the garden gate of Monks House is the signal for what seems like a pack of furiously barking dogs to descend upon us. A brick path leads past the end of the house to a huge garden and orchard. The garden is a kind of patchwork quilt of trees, shrubs, flowers, vegetables, fruit, roses and crocus merging into cabbages and gooseberry bushes. Here and there are fish ponds and peeping from the undergrowth are garden statues.

From one of the several greenhouses my uncle emerges to welcome us. He is delighted to see us. Knowing what children are like, on arrival, he fumbles in a capacious pocket and produces a bag of his favourite mint humbugs.

Leonard is in his sixties, tall, lean, tanned and with a shock of silver hair. His eyes are grey, deep-set under bushy eyebrows and his face is deeply lined. His head, which juts forward, is chiselled, long and spare: he has the rugged profile of an Old Testament prophet smoking a pipe. He is wearing ancient corduroy trousers and a poacher jacket of coarse tweed. His shoes are heavy and made of good leather, like Mr Ramsay's, and one notices that round his woollen tie is an opal ring. His voice is very tremulous – the voice of a man perhaps twenty years older. I almost forgot to tell you that on his shoulder is perched a tiny monkey, a marmoset called Mitzi. I grew very fond of Mitzi.

He takes one round, proudly showing his Worcester Permains, Cox's Orange Pippins, his prize marrows, the extensive collection of succulents, the poppies, Canterbury bells, large yellow daisies, the lupin flower that had become a tree and so much more. He is a huge enthusiast and an expert horticulturalist.

In the small wooden hut on the far side of the garden where she writes, the watch propped against the inkpot and the barking dogs tell my aunt that it's time to break for lunch. Virginia strolls across the garden and looking back I wonder what she was writing that day. Was it her biography of Roger Fry, or her last novel, *Between the Acts*, or perhaps just notes for a talk to the Rodmell Women's Institute, of which she was honorary treasurer?

I remember her figure as tall and slim. Her pale face is very pointed and dominated by large, hooded eyes which fix one and penetrate, sometimes uncomfortably. Her hair is grey and wispy. Her clothes are long, dark and dowdy; here in the country her stockings have large holes and she wears a dreadful long mackintosh. If that sounds like the stage version of the goose-girl, let me say that her bearing is unmistakably that of the grande dame. The impression is of an intense personality. Her manner is friendly and undemonstrative; she looks at you directly,

her speech is incisive. It is an individual voice, developed before the great British flattening, when people's manner of speaking might, apart from any affectation of class, become personal speech. Her talk is shrewd and speculative, withholding nothing. She is unhurried in what she says – confident, very confident: I wonder if memory mistakes me here, but perhaps that apparent confidence covers deep insecurities.

As we go into the house, the impression one has is how cluttered and untidy it all is. The walls are lined with books, there are books on the tables and chairs and piles of books on the floor. Between the shelves are pictures, mainly by Vanessa, Duncan and Roger Fry. The books even climb up the stairs to the upper floor. Monks House always seemed an appropriate name for such a chilly house, though it wasn't until his last year that Leonard discovered that no monk had ever lived there!

At a time when grown-up relatives expected their well brought-up nephews and nieces to address them as uncle, aunt or cousin, it was a mark of Leonard and Virginia's lack of formality or lack of stuffiness that they were just plain Leonard and Virginia.

At lunch, which was not *boeuf en daube* or even haddock and sausages, but perhaps ham or a small portion of white fish, Virginia eats very little. Conversation is lively, boisterous, even, full of surprises, of unpredictable questions, fantasy, books, politics and laughter. I'm reminded of Ezra Pound in his *Cantos*: 'And they want to know what we talked about? Of letters and tragedies and music, Both of ancient times and our own, And men of unusual genius. Both of ancient times and our own, In short, the usual subjects of conversation between intelligent men.'

We talk of everything, everything, that is, except Virginia's own writing. She has enormous curiosity about other people's lives. Observe perpetually, Henry James advised the aspiring novelist. She fires salvos of questions at one and is genuinely interested in the answers. Despite her rather sombre appearance, Virginia could be extremely funny. The image she has in some people's minds of a sad and deeply depressed woman is false. (Nicole Kidman in *The Hours* springs to mind.) Depressed, she certainly was at times, but she was not generally sad. Quite the contrary. Leonard remembered that during the First World War when they sheltered in the basement of their London lodgings from enemy bombing, Virginia made the servants laugh so much that he complained he was unable to sleep. My own recollection of her is of a fun-loving, witty and, at times, slightly malicious person. Leonard himself had a dry and laconic sense of humour.

To many people Virginia appeared an intimidating and formidable figure, and they were mortally afraid of her. Certainly she had an

unfortunate way, at times, of causing acute embarrassment. Virginia was writer and woman, but first and foremost writer. In one of her diary entries she says, 'I want fun. I want fantasy' (*D*3, p. 203). New acquaintances were sometimes devastated when she had fun and fantasy at their expense. She might pick on some innocent fact concerning themselves and blow it up into a story they could barely recognise. Let me give you an example.

A woman called Mrs Easedale, whose daughter had been published by the Hogarth Press, had a son who was a talented musician. Leonard and Virginia had attended a concert at which his music was performed. The mother had told Virginia that she mentioned her son to Sir Henry Wood, the famous conductor of the period. Later, when the Easedales came to tea at Monks House, Virginia announced to the assembled party – 'Mrs Easedale is the bravest woman I know – she went into a big restaurant straight up to Sir Henry who was surrounded by a crowd of ladies and said "Sir Henry my son is a genius!" Now you go on with the story.' Virginia continued in that charming, playful way of hers, 'You see – she has a son who is an unknown distinguished composer.' Next she talked of the recital – the most interesting she had ever attended – the Easedales were the most advanced family in the world – setting to music words no one else would dare, and the most modern music – and delivered in a half serious, half humorous way. This trick of blowing up a few facts into something quite different and then inviting a bystander to 'go on with the story' was not uncommon with her. And whilst friends may have thought it was amusing, to the uninitiated it was excruciatingly cruel.

I don't think she was aware of the cringing embarrassment such behaviour caused. Neither can I recall ever being the victim of what Leonard called her 'taking off' – using a prosaic incident or statement to create a mountain of fantasy. I never remember being 'afraid' of her, only impressed by her wit, insight and fertile invention. The takings off were, I think, partly the novelist giving free reign to her imagination and partly a manifestation of that child-like freedom from everyday banality, which was part of her nature.

Staying at Monks House or Tavistock Square one never felt exactly pampered, but the other side of that coin was that one was left to entertain oneself. Hospitality can sometimes become oppressive. Monks House, which the Woolfs had bought in 1919, was not a comfortable house even twenty years later, after they had made a good many alterations. By then they had electricity installed, mains water and a flush lavatory replaced the traditional sanitation of an earth closet. They never had central heating.

Leonard and Virginia were naturally frugal and my uncle undoubtedly carried this carefulness, this abhorrence of what he perceived as waste, to the point of eccentricity. I remember, for example, that in the lavatory printers' proofs were hung up for use as toilet paper. One used to hear people say, 'look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves'. Leonard was almost obsessive about looking after the pennies, but I will talk a little more about that in a moment.

In those pre-war days and early in the Second World War, I also stayed with them on several occasions in London, at 52 Tavistock Square, where they lived over the offices of the Hogarth Press. As in Sussex, so in London, Virginia was an energetic walker. I had the strong feeling, however, that London was where she belonged naturally. I remember a number of regular walks we took together, notably to the British Museum Library and to the London Library in St James' Square. She made friends with one of the staff at the London Library who had known Thomas Carlyle.

I was a schoolboy at Stowe when I learnt of Virginia's death. I had been privileged to be taught by and become a friend of an outstanding English master, the Shakespearean and Miltonian critic, G. Wilson Knight. It was he who told me of that last, lonely walk along the swollen River Ouse and her decision to end it all. In 1941, Virginia Woolf's death was not headline news, particularly at that stage in world history. When an author dies obituaries are published in the papers and those who had dealings with him or her write to *The Times* to place on record their memories. In a short time he or she is no longer news and is quietly consigned to oblivion. Then, if he or she is fortunate, after a certain number of years, perhaps a few, perhaps many, depending often on circumstances having nothing to do with literature, he or she will be remembered and restored to public favour. Virginia Woolf is of course a notable example of this. In her case, it was twenty years before her writings were rediscovered by a multitude of readers worldwide.

The end of the Second World War found me a young soldier. When I eventually resumed life as a civilian, Leonard offered me a flat in his London house – the house he leased in Westminster after Mecklenburgh Square was bombed and Virginia had died. The Hogarth Press was at that time about to become an imprint of Chatto & Windus. Leonard still worked several days a week at the press. I saw him daily and to some extent he came to regard me as a surrogate son. After business he would knock heavily on my door at teatime and we would indulge in the ritual of tea and buttered toast. All his life, he and other members of my family suffered from a pronounced inherited tremor, which

particularly affected his hand. As he raised the teacup, his hand would shake to such an extent that at times he would put his handkerchief round his neck and use it to haul his tea to his mouth. (As children this procedure was something that had caused a great deal of suppressed amusement.) Sometimes we would go out for a hot curry in an Indian restaurant, or to the theatre. He was always very good company.

I have already referred to his carefulness and austerity and no one who writes or talks about him can avoid the subject. It has to be admitted that my uncle did not enjoy a worldwide reputation for doling out largesse. Everyone who knew Leonard has stories of his overdeveloped sense of economy, particularly with money, and most of us came to regard this as an endearing foible. We were at the theatre one evening and sitting next to Leonard was an elderly clergyman who throughout the first half of the play was eating from a box of chocolates with unusually noisy wrappings. When the lights went up for the interval and his neighbour left his seat, Leonard noticed that one chocolate had fallen to the floor at his feet. He promptly produced a handkerchief, dusted down the chocolate and popped it in his mouth.

When Leonard wrote a letter or paid a bill, I don't think he ever used a new envelope. He invariably crossed out the old address, wrote in the new one, pasted it down at the back, and posted it. Even the blank back of the letter you had sent him would be recycled for the carbon copy he often kept of his correspondence. I was staying at Monks House in the late 1950s I suppose, and after a particularly austere supper I strolled out to the village pub in search of nourishment. I asked the landlord if he could provide a sandwich or a pie – anything – and in the course of conversation he asked if I happened to be staying at Mr Woolf's. When I told him I was, he wagged his head knowingly, "Yes, they all come here for a bite after dinner."

It must have been about this time that I accompanied Leonard to Brighton, where he went round a number of bookshops soliciting orders for Hogarth Press publications. After a long morning tramping round the town, Leonard asked me if I was ready for lunch. When I said that I was, he disappeared into a nearby baker's shop. He came out a few moments later and produced from his pocket a notebook in which he wrote in a shaky hand what he had bought for lunch – 'Two bread and butter roles, 2 pence'. I mention this incident not only to illustrate Leonard's carefulness with money, but also to show his obsession with accounting for his expenditure. Everything was recorded. The yield of every fruit tree in his orchard, the score of games of boules on the lawn, the profit or loss of every Hogarth Press publication, the cost of

every holiday, less, of course, the notional expenditure had they stayed at home. Was this a habit he had formed when he was a district officer at Hambantoto, or was he one of nature's administrators, with the heart and soul of an accountant?

But these are trivia. Without withdrawing a word of what I have just said, I must tell you that Leonard was *not* a mean man. I believe he did a great deal of good by stealth over many years. During many talks I learned the deep integrity of Leonard's passion for truth. Leonard was a practising socialist. And under a rather solemn exterior was a great sense of fun.

As the years passed, he spent less time in London and more at Monks House with Trekkie Parsons, the wife of his partner at Chatto & Windus. His diaries for those last years indicate that he continued to work – day after day occurs the one word 'work'. In the 1950s he began to write his autobiography. The first volume, *Sowing*, received discouraging reviews, but the second won him a prestigious literary prize, and by the fifth and final volume he was becoming well-known in his own right. Virginia's reputation, which had passed through something of a trough, was now burgeoning, particularly in the United States and Japan. Leonard himself had been the subject of a long and successful television interview with the well-known British journalist and writer, Malcolm Muggeridge, and he was something of a celebrity.

Leonard was nearly ninety when he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage at Monks House in 1969. (I had seen him in London a week or two before, running down Victoria Street to catch a bus to his office.) I had arranged to have lunch that day with a young woman, who is now my wife, the mother of our five children and the author of a number of very fine books, including several on Virginia, Leonard and Bloomsbury. After that stroke, Leonard was calling out for me. Lunch with Jean Moorcroft Wilson had to be cancelled. I went at once to Rodmell and it was the first of several visits I paid over the months he hung on. His great pleasures in life – books, politics, gardening and, of course, Virginia – were no more. Virginia had died twenty-eight years earlier and now he could no longer read or write or tend his garden.

Leonard has been represented occasionally as a penny-pinching and tyrannical husband and employer. The truth is that he was an extraordinarily good, warm-hearted and generous man – a loveable man – whose unstinting devotion to his wife not only kept her alive, but happy and enormously creative for some thirty years of their marriage.

I have talked of two people of whom almost every detail of their lives has become public property. But it is sometimes forgotten, I think, that

these were 'real' human beings, not characters in some upmarket 'soap'. Their marriage was a very loving one: it was very productive, but how far it was happy is another matter and beyond an outsider's knowledge. Happiness can be ruined by children, or lack of children, by too much or too little sex, by financial anxieties, by so many secret things. Love too can be ruined, but I think their love withstood the pressures of Virginia's recurring illness. They kept busy. They both worked enormously hard, writing their books, sitting on all those committees, building a fine publishing house. When I think of Virginia as I remember her, rather than as I have read of her, I know that a great deal eludes me, as it eludes all of us who have ever thought of the strangeness of being. At fourteen and less, few, very few people are sufficiently mature to take in and fully treasure the experience of meeting and enjoying the company of someone touched, if not by the hand of God, then at least by genius. But what is important, above all else, is that her books have given her a future she could have never imagined.

2
The Voyage Back: Woolf's Revisions and Returns

Suzanne Raitt

On 11 August 1905, Vanessa, Thoby, Virginia and Adrian Stephen boarded a train for St Ives. It was the first time they had been back to Cornwall since the summer of 1894, their mother's last summer and the summer that marked the end of their childhood. In 1904, their father had died. Thus they returned as orphans, or as Virginia put it in her diary, as 'ghosts', to the house which had embodied the noise and intensity of their family life (*PA*, p. 282). Virginia wrote:

> We would fain have believed that this little corner of England had slept under some enchanters spell since we last set eyes on it ten years ago, & that no breath of change had stirred its leaves, or troubled its waters. There too, we should find our past preserved, as though through all this time it had been guarded & treasured for us to come back to one day. (*PA*, p. 281)

Their return proved both melancholy and prosaic. Lingering on the steps of what had been their home, 'at the sound of footsteps' they turned away, reminded that 'the lights were not [their] lights' and 'the voices were the voices of strangers' (*PA*, p. 282). But visits to 'certain old St Ives people' (Mrs Daniels, the washerwoman who reappears as Mrs MacNab in *To the Lighthouse*, Jinny Berryman, who used to help in the house, and the Pascoes, who kept the bathing tents) returned them to their past (*PA*, p. 286). As Virginia put it, 'we were like, we were unlike, we were, at any rate, the old family come back again' (*PA*, p. 287).

In this chapter I explore the poetics of return and of revision – seeing things again – in Woolf's work. Over the last decade or so, as her novels have moved in and out of copyright both in the United Kingdom and in the United States, critics have begun to return to her work as editors,

as well as scholars and critics, and this enterprise has produced not only a range of newly edited and annotated texts, but also an emerging preoccupation with Virginia Woolf's relationship with her own writing, with what Pierre-Marc de Biasi has called 'the day-by-day story [. . .] of the life of the writer at work: a secret tale, almost always absent from literary biographies, and which nevertheless constitutes the crux of what we would like to know about the author' (de Biasi, 1996, p. 29). Such editorial undertakings were already under way as early as the 1960s, and they have gained added impetus as the decades go by. As more and more of Woolf's holograph drafts, typescripts and corrected proofs come to light and are published, it has become possible to reconstruct the story of her novels' composition and to trace the changes that she made. Editors including Louise DeSalvo, Susan Dick and others have confirmed what Leonard Woolf had already revealed: that Virginia Woolf revised her texts intensely, perhaps even obsessively, returning to them over and over again. I consider those returns in the context of the novels' own preoccupations with what it means to go back to something, whether that be a place, a person, a book or a rough draft. The work I have chosen to concentrate on is *To the Lighthouse*, because it is shaped by a return both to a place and to a work of art. I shall argue that, for Woolf, textual revision, like returning home after a long absence, was an experience of both loss and restitution, disappointing and hopeful at the same time. In spite of what Leonard Woolf called her 'dogged persistence' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 57), throughout her life Woolf dreaded the process of revising her work, and associated it obscurely but persistently with feelings of deprivation and despair. Her returns to her own texts were as complex and as intense as Lily's return to the Isle of Skye, a trip during which Lily both re-encounters her past and makes the final revisions to her half-finished painting.

Even in a text as urbane and careful as *A Room of One's Own*, the idea of manuscript revision is associated with memories of discomfort and exclusion. The narrator of *A Room of One's Own* is interested in entering a college library to examine the manuscripts of Milton's "Lycidas" and Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*. As she wanders around the sunlit 'courts and quadrangles of Oxbridge' (*AROO*, p. 6), she remembers an essay by Charles Lamb, in which he describes a visit to Cambridge (rendered as Oxford in the essay) to look at Milton's drafts. Woolf muses 'how it shocked [Lamb] to think it possible that any word in *Lycidas* could have been different from what it is. To think of Milton changing the words in that poem seemed to him a sort of sacrilege' (*AROO*, p. 5). A footnote in the essay by Lamb which Woolf recalls, "Oxford in the Vacation"

(1820), deploys the same fantasy of intactness with which years later Woolf would approach her childhood home:

> I had thought of the Lycidas as of a full-grown beauty – as springing up with all its parts absolute – till, in evil hour, I was shown the original written copy of it, together with the other minor poems of its author, in the Library of Trinity, kept like some treasure to be proud of. I wish they had thrown them in the Cam, or sent them, after the latter cantos of Spenser, into the Irish Channel. How it staggered me to see the fine things in their ore! interlined, corrected! as if their words were mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure! as if they might have been otherwise, and just as good! as if inspirations were made up of parts, and those fluctuating, successive, indifferent. (Lamb, 1903, p. 311)

His distress is similar to Woolf's feeling as she hesitated on the threshold of Talland House, listening to the voices of the family who have replaced her own in what used to be her home. People, like words, are, in Lamb's phrase, 'mortal, alterable, displaceable at pleasure' (Lamb, 1903, p. 311): they can change, they can be erased and they can be replaced by new examples.

The image the narrator of *A Room of One's Own* uses to describe Lamb's musings on "Lycidas" also recalls Talland House and Julia Stephen's, or at least Mrs Ramsay's, death. When the narrator first recalls Lamb as she wanders around Cambridge, she murmurs to herself: 'Saint Charles, said Thackeray, putting a letter of Lamb's to his forehead' (*AROO*, p. 6), echoing Lily's description of Mrs Ramsay's death in *To the Lighthouse*, when she imagines her 'raising to her forehead a wreath of white flowers with which she went' (*TTL*, p. 181). Woolf's father lies behind this passage too: the manuscript of *Henry Esmond* that the narrator wishes to examine was donated to Trinity College by Leslie Stephen, who inherited it from his first wife, Minny Thackeray. Reflections on the contingency of art are shaped here in some submerged way by memories of change and contingency in Woolf's own past: the deaths of her parents, the substitution of one wife for another. The damage inflicted on Lamb's fantasy of "Lycidas" by his examination of the much revised manuscript is similar to the pain of Woolf's return to her elusive childhood. Something that was perfect in the imagination or in recollection is re-encountered in a damaged or provisional form.

Remembering and returning, then, are dangerous. The thing you seek may turn out to be gone forever, or even never to have existed. Memory

can be unmasked as fantasy; perfection can be exposed as a lucky guess. To return to the beginning, or have it return to you, is often to encounter damage. Hence the intensity and complexity of Woolf's struggles with her own past. When she was in a state of near breakdown in May 1936 as she revised *The Years*, Leonard was so concerned about her that he 'insisted she should break off and take a complete holiday for a fortnight' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 153). Leonard picked St Ives as the one place that might soothe what he called his wife's 'jangled nerves' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 154):

> No casements are so magic, no faery lands so forlorn as those which all our lives we treasure in our memory of the summer holidays of our childhood. Cornwall never failed to fill Virginia with this feeling of nostalgia and romance. (L. Woolf, 1967, pp. 153–4)

As what Leonard called 'the final cure', in an echo of the young Virginia Stephen's visit with her siblings thirty years earlier, Virginia and Leonard 'crept into the garden of Talland House and in the dusk Virginia peered through the ground-floor windows to see the ghosts of her childhood' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 154). Virginia's diary is silent on the subject of this return to the past. Leonard noted that after the holiday 'Virginia seemed to be a good deal better', but three weeks later, after she returned once again to the proofs of *The Years* 'it became clear that she had not really recovered' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 154). She spent the rest of the summer at Rodmell, writing nothing and seeing almost no one. If the return to Cornwall seemed to heal her for a time, the healing was only temporary.

The one return to Cornwall that even Virginia Woolf described as curative was the writing of *To the Lighthouse*. In returning in her imagination to Talland House she mastered her dead parents' power over her, writing in her diary in November 1928 that she 'used to think of [her father] & mother daily; but writing The Lighthouse, laid them in my mind. [. . .] I was obsessed by them both, unhealthily; & writing of them was a necessary act'. Now, when her father returns, he 'comes back . . . differently', she remarked, 'more as a contemporary' (*D*3, p. 208). But even that act of healing involved a loss: 'Why', Woolf wondered in her autobiography, 'because I described [my mother] and my feeling for her in that book, should my vision of her and my feeling for her become so much dimmer and weaker?' (*MB*, p. 81). Returning and revising are transformative, but they can also subdue. If what is subdued was dangerous, then the transformation can be welcome, but Woolf was ambivalent

about returning to her manuscripts, or for that matter to her past, merely to tame them. '[D]espair at the badness of the book', she wrote in her diary two days after beginning to revise *The Pargiters*: 'cant think how I ever could write such stuff – & with such excitement' (*D*4, p. 262). Revision interfered with the memory of the unself-conscious joy of the writing of the first draft, and destroyed the illusion that what was written might have no flaws.

Some critics have argued that what is revealed in early versions of texts that have subsequently been revised for publication is the raw intensity of what Freud called infantile wishes: libido and aggression. Susan Stanford Friedman, for example, describes drafts as the '"textual unconscious" of the "final" text', and how 'the author revises the text by the linguistic mechanisms of the dream-work: by condensation, displacement, non-rational modes of representability, and secondary revision' (Friedman, 1989, p. 145). Similarly, Laurent Jenny asserts that: 'The indecision of the pre-text preserves the mobility of the fantasy that necessarily reduces the final text. Hence the pre-text is a repository of precious documents on the unconscious' (Jenny, 1996, p. 20). The idea that subsequent versions of literary texts demonstrate a kind of adulthood that to many readers is something of a disappointment has – unsurprisingly, given the ascendancy of psychoanalytic criticism in Woolf studies – been influential on critical assessments of Woolf's motives in revising her texts. Most critics agree that often, Woolf's revisions tone down the anger, the feminism and/or the sexual directness of her first drafts. Grace Radin maintains that the 'handwritten drafts [of *The Years*] seem to function for [Woolf] as a way of venting her own anger and frustration, freeing her to write her final version more reasonably' (Radin, 1981, pp. 4–5). Kate Flint notes that the holograph manuscript of *Jacob's Room* is much more explicit than the published novel about the sexual musings of its women characters (Flint, 1991, p. 367). Louise DeSalvo argues that subsequent drafts of *The Voyage Out* distance the novel from Woolf's own autobiography and mute some of Rachel's more awkward or pointed insights into her own predicament (DeSalvo, 1980, p. 154); and James Haule has claimed that the revisions Woolf made to the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse* weakened the links she initially made between male sexual brutality and the waging of the First World War (Haule, 1991, p. 166). The consensus seems to be, then, that in terms of content at least, when she revised, Woolf was removing or disguising potentially embarrassing or inflammatory material from her published work. She seemed to admit as much herself when she wrote in "Professions for Women" that the woman writer is obliged to censor herself: 'The consciousness of what

men will say of a woman who speaks the truth about her passions had roused her from her artist's state of unconsciousness. She could write no more' (*CE2*, p. 288). Even Leonard commented on the contrast between the 'concentrated passion' and the 'emotion and imagination' of her state when she was writing the first draft of a novel, and the 'dispassionate equanimity' (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 53) with which she approached the task of revision, as if the excitement of creation had been replaced by blank drudgery. The energy and excitement of the writing of the original, unexpurgated version are excised in the process of returning and reworking for publication.

The emotional strain of finishing the first draft of *To the Lighthouse* was particularly intense. Leonard Woolf noted that the 'crises of exhaustion and black despair' that overcame her every time she finished a novel worsened as the years went by, even as her mental state more generally seemed to improve (L. Woolf, 1967, p. 153). Thinking back over *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf acknowledged that after she finished the first draft she was 'nearer suicide, seriously, than since 1913', when she actually did attempt to take her own life (*D*4, p. 253). The diary she wrote at the time gives some hints of her mental state. Two nights before she completed the first draft in mid-September, she describes lying awake in the darkness and feeling overcome by

> horror – physically like a painful wave swelling about the heart [. . .] I say it doesn't matter. Nothing matters. I become rigid & straight, & sleep again, & half wake & feel the wave beginning & watch the light whitening & wonder how, this time, breakfast & daylight will overcome it. (*D*3, p. 110)

Two weeks later she wrote of 'Intense depression [. . .] the high pure hot days went on & on; & this blankness persisted, & I began to suspect my book of the same thing; & then there was Nessa humming & booming & flourishing over the hill' (*D*3, p. 111). This sense of despair and failure, especially in comparison to her sister's life, full of colour and children, stayed with her until she and Leonard returned to London at the beginning of October, when, carefully and reluctantly, she finally started to work on the novel again.

Woolf's revisions of *To the Lighthouse* were bound up with her sense that to revise was both to discover and to inflict damage. Once a draft of a novel was finished, to return to it was to be reminded of its and her own contingency. She wrote *To the Lighthouse* as a labour of love, with 'father's character done complete in it; & mothers; & St Ives; & childhood'

(*D*3, p. 18), and writing it was often a pure pleasure: 'Never never have I written so easily, imagined so profusely', she wrote in February 1926 (*D*3, p. 58). But that ease vanished as soon as the novel was ready for revision. It was over a month before she returned to it, as if she feared that the beauty and fullness she remembered there would turn out to have eluded her once again, like the childhood world she searched for on each return to St Ives. Revising her own writing was like a kind of self-harm, going back and destroying something which had at one time seemed, if not perfect, at least full of promise. The changes she inevitably made to her text were a kind of mutilation. *To the Lighthouse* dramatised the emotional and aesthetic dynamics of a return to a place, a journey and a work of art that could be recaptured and completed only if the damage they had suffered was confronted head-on. As Woolf went through the first proofs of *To the Lighthouse* in late February she found herself imagining once again the possibility of her own failure, telling Vita Sackville-West that she was 'crossing out commas and putting in semi-colons in a state of marmoreal despair' (*L*3, p. 333).

Although Woolf's revision of *To the Lighthouse* can be seen as an encounter with death and loss, her changes were also, of course, first and foremost the work of an artist. The minute attention she paid to individual words, her sense of the importance of detail, and her desire to create writing that was musical and painterly as well as literary, all demonstrate the extent to which her decisions about her texts were in large part taken deliberately, for aesthetic reasons. Such changes are notoriously hard to interpret and to assess. It is generally agreed that Woolf's revisions, which often involved removing narrative and characterological detail, produced a more concentrated, imagistic prose, but it is hard to establish once and for all the aesthetic philosophy that governed the changes she made, partly, of course, because her own sense of style was continually evolving. More than once she announced that she had finally managed to write something 'in her own voice' or style (*D*2, p. 186; *D*4, p. 53). Whether or not all her novels were inevitably improved by her stylistic revisions is an open question, sometimes even for her, and certainly at least some of the depression she experienced during the pre-publication phase of each text derived from the feeling that her writing was artistically worthless. Correcting the proofs of *Jacob's Room*, she wrote: 'The thing now reads thin & pointless; the words scarcely dint the paper' (*D*2, p. 199), and this was a feeling she would experience many times more.

In *To the Lighthouse* Lily, returning to her painting of Mrs Ramsay and James after a ten-year absence, feels a mixture of despair and elation at

going back to an art work that has remained unfinished in her mind. Of course, Lily does not find her original painting and rework it. Rather, she takes a new 'clean canvas' (*TTL*, p. 149) on which she decides to paint the picture that has 'been knocking about in her mind all these years' (*TTL*, p. 147). She sees the new painting as the completion of the old: 'Suddenly she remembered. [. . .] There had been a problem about a foreground of a picture. Move the tree to the middle, she had said. She had never finished that picture. She would paint that picture now' (*TTL*, p. 147). She returns to her earlier version with a solution to the problem she encountered in her initial draft, and at the end of the novel she finally completes the revised version of her painting.

However, she can complete it only after exposing herself to the onslaught of loss. Returning to the painting and to her memory of the lost scene it commemorates makes her feel vulnerable, 'like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt' (*TTL*, p. 158). To repaint the picture is to return to the past knowing that it is gone forever, and a searing feeling of absence precedes the final completion of the painting. It is only after she has cried out to Mrs Ramsay that Mrs Ramsay appears to return, reviving the contours of the original scene. To 'want and not to have – to want and want – how that wrung the heart, and wrung it again and again! Oh, Mrs Ramsay! she called out silently' (*TTL*, p. 178). Then: 'Suddenly the window at which she was looking was whitened by some light stuff behind it. At last then somebody had come into the drawing-room; somebody was sitting in the chair' (*TTL*, p. 201). It seems to Lily that: 'Mrs Ramsay – it was part of her perfect goodness – sat there quite simply, in the chair' (*TTL*, p. 202). A few minutes later Lily makes the final decisive brush-stroke, and the painting is done.

It cannot be finished, however, until Lily has acknowledged both the irreparable nature of her loss, and the impossibility of returning to the original scene and its original image. When she feels that Mrs Ramsay has returned Lily knows at the same time that she has not, that it is someone else who has taken her place, just as the new painting completes, but can never be the same as the old. To finish something by revising it is to erase the original version. So, I am suggesting, Virginia Woolf fell into despair on finishing a first draft partly because she knew that the next stage of creation was to destroy it. In the case of *To the Lighthouse*, this meant harming her recreation of her own past and the destruction of the fantasy that somewhere it had persisted intact. As she wrote in the passage with which I opened, she hoped that in returning to Cornwall

she would find her 'past preserved, as though through all this time it had been guarded & treasured for us to come back to one day' (*PA*, p. 281). To have recaptured it, even if only in words, and then to return to it in order to change it, was to deprive herself once again of the magic of her early years.

However, in spite of the desperation Woolf felt after the first draft was finished, revising *To the Lighthouse* turned out to be less consistently painful than she had feared, although as she worked on it she continued to plunge in and out of depression. There were times when she even felt hopeful: 'My present opinion is that it is easily the best of my books, fuller than J.'s R. & less spasmodic, occupied with more interesting things than Mrs D. & not complicated with all that desperate accompaniment of madness. It is freer & subtler I think' (*D*3, p. 117). In mid-January 1927, after three months of 'revising & retyping (some parts 3 times over)', she was optimistic: 'a hard muscular book' (*D*3, p. 123). In March, buoyed up by Leonard's praise, she was correcting the final proofs and thinking to herself 'how lovely some parts of The Lighthouse are! Soft & pliable, and I think deep, & never a word wrong for a page at a time' (*D*3, p. 132). Part of the reason for these intermittent feelings of confidence may have been that many of her major changes altered the text in such a way that descriptions of despair, loneliness and mortality were muted in the final version, partly by a stronger emphasis on Lily's work as a painter, struggling with multiple versions of her picture. Even though Woolf retained a sense that to revise was also to engage in some form with damage (the passage on Lamb and "Lycidas" that I quoted earlier was written well after *To the Lighthouse* was finished), in the end she came to believe that overall, writing *To the Lighthouse* was in some sense curative. Re-creating the world of her childhood as a work of art was a way to recover from loss, as well as to engage with it. But the loss had to be re-encountered as part of the process of creation if revision was also to be growth and improvement.

This re-encountering of loss is apparent in a couple of key passages from *To the Lighthouse*. There are several extant versions of the novel: the holograph, which was edited and published by Susan Dick, one set of corrected proofs which were used for the first American edition, and the two first editions (British and American), which differ in some fairly substantive ways. In what follows, I shall concentrate on variants between the holograph and the first British and American editions.

As I have shown, one of the causes of Woolf's misery as she finished the first draft of *To the Lighthouse* was a sense that her life was pale in comparison with her sister's. 'Vanessa. Children. Failure. Yes; I detect

that. Failure failure' (*D*3, p. 110). A passage in the holograph version of the novel describes Lily's similar envy of the Ramsays:

> Not to be educated, ~~to~~ not to be beautiful, (~~only to have~~ her only good points were ~~her~~ feet & figure) ~~not~~ to be therefore as obviously superfluous as a human being could be, & yet how could it have been otherwise? – left motherless as she was & the eldest, with ~~an~~ younger sisters (they had married) & a father who ~~could not~~ wanted her. No, she could not see how things could have been different, & her ~~only~~ plain duty was to ~~be~~ look ~~clean~~ & tidy, to& never to ~~let anybody guess~~ not to cry, though, for some reason, when she came to stay with the Ramsays & saw them so happy, &so free, ~~& it became, at moments, intolerable~~. with all sorts of chances she had never had, & a father & mother, like that, the pain, ~~sometimes~~, was scarcely ~~to be born~~. ~~Mr. Bankes~~ But with Mr. Bankes it was somehow easy & comfortable, & and she felt mildly ~~that~~ successful with him, & so, ~~putting~~ laying down her brushes with alacrity side by side in the box, she ~~did~~ agreed, it ~~was~~ got suddenly cold . . . (*TTL Holograph*, p. 36)

In the published version, this passage has been condensed to:

> And it was then too, in that chill and windy way, as she began to paint, that there forced themselves upon her other things, her own inadequacy, her insignificance, keeping house for her father off the Brompton Road, and had much ado to control her impulse to fling herself (thank Heaven she had always resisted so far) at Mrs Ramsay's knee and say to her – but what could one say to her? "I'm in love with you?" No, that was not true. "I'm in love with this all", waving her hand at the hedge, at the house, at the children. It was absurd, it was impossible. [One could not say what one meant.] So now she laid her brushes neatly in the box, side by side, and said to William Bankes: [. . .] (*TTL*, p. 19; parenthesis appears in British edition but not in American edition)

The rawness and the pathos of the original version are largely gone, along with Lily's envy of the Ramsay children, and the passage concludes with a half-humorous acknowledgement of her idealisation of the Ramsay household. The distress of the first version, echoed in Woolf's own distress as she finished the first draft, is elided in the revision, as if Lily's pain at the bleakness of her future and Woolf's fear of her return to her text can be transcended by the acknowledgement of an awkward kind of love.

One of the sources of Lily's increased hopefulness in the final, published novel is an added emphasis on her work as a painter, and in particular on her approach to artistic revision. In the strange night-scene when Mrs Ramsay insists that Lily must marry and, it is implied, have children, the final text says: 'Oh, but, Lily would say, there was her father; her home; even, had she dared to say it, her painting' (*TTL*, p. 50). This passage also occurs in the holograph, but Lily's painting is omitted from the list of reasons she gives for not marrying: 'But ~~Lil~~ Lily would protest, she could not leave her home; her father; her ~~sisters~~; brothers' (*TTL Holograph*, p. 89). In the draft, in other words, Lily cannot marry because she must stay at home to care for her father and brothers (and Woolf strengthens the patriarchal force of Lily's situation by substituting 'brothers' for 'sisters' as the relatives she must look after). In the published version, Lily's response is less forceful (she 'says' rather than 'protests') and more evasive (she fails to mention her art to Mrs Ramsay even though she remembers it); but nonetheless she has a private sense of what marks her out as different from the other women Mrs Ramsay has pushed into marriage, a feeling of self-worth that is fulfilled when, at the end of the novel, she not only outlasts Mrs Ramsay but also completes her painting. Indeed returning to her painting, however agonising, allows her to revise not only her memories of Mrs Ramsay but also her relationship to Mr Ramsay, as if the chasm of Mrs Ramsay's death can finally be leapt over by the resolution of an aesthetic problem.

Revising a draft was, then, for Woolf a profoundly ambiguous act. Returning to anything, or to anywhere, has the power to hurt. As Woolf said of herself and her siblings when they went back to Cornwall in 1905, the place and the people – including those who return – are always 'like and unlike', themselves and not themselves; harm can be done to sustaining fantasies of continuity and intactness (*PA*, p. 287). But for Woolf at certain times, as for Lily, returning and revising could be a way out of that fear of damage to the place or to the self. As we continue to read and re-read Woolf, she will continue to return to us in unfamiliar and revealing ways, 'like and unlike' the writer we thought we knew.

3
'Young writers might do worse': Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Virginia Stephen and Virginia Woolf

Beth Rigel Daugherty

As Virginia Woolf notes in "The Leaning Tower", education 'play[s] a very important part in a writer's work' (*CE*2, p. 168). She expresses astonishment at 'how little stress has been laid upon the writer's education' and notes how writers 'cannot throw away their education' because it has been 'stamped upon them indelibly' (*CE*2, pp. 169, 172). Woolf might agree, then, that the young Virginia Stephen's home education had some influence over the writer she became. Leslie and Julia Stephen, other teachers, such as her brother, Thoby Stephen, George Warr, Clara Pater and Janet Case, along with indirect educators such as the London Library, *Tit-Bits* and her youthful reading, all made their mark.[1] Two aunts, Caroline Emelia Stephen and Anne Isabella Thackeray Ritchie, were also important teachers in Virginia Stephen's life – both were direct and practical in the face of tragedy, resisted Leslie's manipulative tyranny, lived independent lives and, perhaps most important, were writers. Caroline Emelia Stephen's main influence came later in Virginia Stephen's apprenticeship, which Jane Marcus details in "The Niece of a Nun". During Virginia's earlier home schooling, Anne Thackeray Ritchie was frequently at 22 Hyde Park Gate as a friend to both Leslie and Julia Stephen. The sister of Leslie's first wife, Minny, and close to Julia Duckworth long before Leslie married her (she had first met Julia Jackson through Julia Margaret Cameron), 'Aunt Anny' was William Makepeace Thackeray's daughter, a successful novelist in her own right, and interestingly enough, living out a life whose pattern Virginia Stephen's would come to resemble: a father's tutelage and favour, the loss of a mother, mental instability in the family, a late marriage. Anny was also an 'honorary' aunt, giving her influence without the need for automatic resistance from her young 'niece'.[2]

When Anne Thackeray Ritchie died in 1919 at the age of 82, Virginia Woolf was 37 and preparing to publish *Night and Day* with its 'touches of Lady Ritchie in Mrs Hilbery' (*L*2, p. 406). In her obituary tribute, Woolf points to some of Anne Thackeray Ritchie's teaching: 'Young writers might do worse than go to Lady Ritchie's pages for an example of the power of an apparently simple and yet inevitably right sense of the use of language' (*E*3, pp. 14–15). Indeed, Woolf identifies several of Ritchie's lessons in three different essays: a review of Ritchie's *Blackstick Papers* in 1908, written during her apprenticeship; the obituary, "Lady Ritchie", published in February 1919; and "The Enchanted Organ", an essay-review of Hester Ritchie's *Letters of Anne Thackeray Ritchie* published in March 1924. Stephen/Woolf analyses Ritchie's method in her early review; uses the obituary to point to Ritchie's legacy: her use of language, the 'sharp edges' under the 'tremulous shadows', and her art as a writer of memoir; and notes Ritchie's different view of the Victorians and use of language again in the later essay review.

I am not the first to suggest, as Hermione Lee puts it, that Woolf 'learned a great deal from Aunt Anny' (Lee, 2004, p. 9). Jane Fisher mentions Ritchie's 'keen sense of her audience' and the 'conversational tone' of her letters and journals (Fisher, 1996, p. 197). Ronald McCail, Jane Marcus and Julia Briggs, building on the early work of Joanne Zuckerman, have noted various threads tying Ritchie and *Night and Day* together. Barbara J. Dunlap comments on the 'affinities' between the two writers, and calls Ritchie 'a precursor' of Woolf's fiction (Dunlap, 1983, p. 256). Carol Hanbery MacKay claims that Woolf 'discovered the power of speaking in her own voice and exercising her sense of humour' through reading her aunt's work (MacKay, 1987, p. 69) and points out a common interest in reported conversations and the evocation of the past (MacKay, 1987, p. 82). Manuela Mourão's detailed studies of Ritchie's concealed feminism in her short stories, novels, and essays and Trev Lynn Brougton's comparison of Leslie Stephen and Anne Thackeray Ritchie's autobiographical conceptions of the writer's work reveal other connections. Biographical and critical work by Lillian Shankman, Elizabeth French Boyd, Katherine Hill-Miller, Winifred Gérin and Henrietta Garnett notes the similarities between the two lives (family losses and a father's teaching) and in the two arts: impressionistic style and charm. Most recently, Ann Martin has explored Ritchie's adaptations of fairy tales as part of her legacy to Woolf along with Woolf's multiple uses of and ambivalent relationship to that inheritance.[3]

When Woolf wrote that 'young writers might do worse' than study Anne Thackeray Ritchie, then, she was directly acknowledging a debt,

the debt of a novice writer to the experienced one, the debt of a student to a teacher. She had observed Ritchie and learned something about how to conduct a writing life. She had 'studied' Ritchie's associative language, her scene-making ability and her method of blending anecdote, scene, dialogue, memories and references. She had read Ritchie's 'assigned' texts by women and her essays about those women writers. And she may have taken lessons from *Atalanta*, a magazine for middle-class girls to which Ritchie contributed, and probably gave to the Stephen daughters.

Living in a household that catered to a professional man of letters, Virginia Stephen could see a professional *woman* of letters in Anne Thackeray Ritchie. The young Virginia Stephen was probably aware of her aunt's habit of writing every morning (MacCarthy, 1948, p. 80), and it certainly did not escape her that Aunt Anny expressed enthusiasm for the Stephens' new place in Bloomsbury (*PA*, p. 228), and thus, by implication, Virginia Stephen's declaration of personal and professional independence. In February 1905, she dropped her severely pruned review of Henry James off at 'Mrs. L's house on my way to lunch with At. Anny at the Sesame' (*PA*, p. 237), a juxtaposition that suggests at least the possibility of a lunchtime conversation between the novice and the professional about writing. And although Woolf calls a letter from Aunt Anny 'rather dull' in a letter to Vanessa Bell in 1916, it is 'all about books', suggesting an ongoing conversation between the older and younger woman about their reading and perhaps their work (*L2*, p. 105).

Also, Anne Thackeray Ritchie went her own way. Leslie Stephen may have chided her about her exaggeration and her overspending, but Anny laughed at *his* exaggerated 'glooms'[4] and 'wrote back' to him in print. As MacKay points out, Ritchie's essay on "Toilers and Spinsters" directly refutes Stephen's "The Redundancy of Women" (MacKay, 1987, p. 83). The idea that anyone could be worried about spinsters, who were supposedly depressed and had no purpose in life, was simply laughable to her (Ritchie, 1876a, pp. 1–5). As Miss Thackeray, Anny lived quite contentedly for 40 years, and when she fell in love, married a man 17 years her junior and had two children with him (the second at age 42). Hardly helpless in financial matters, Ritchie, according to Janice Harris, handled all her own correspondence with editors and publishers, negotiating her own deals without recourse to Leslie Stephen or to Richmond Ritchie (Harris, 1986, pp. 388–9).[5] Also, if Ritchie's Victorian version of post-it notes on manuscripts condemns her, then many contemporary writers are in trouble.[6] Indeed, Lillian Shankman suggests that Ritchie's

famed 'scattiness' was a cover – no one could be that dotty and achieve what Ritchie did (Shankman, 1994, p. 265) – and Mourão notes that Ritchie achieved remarkable independence because she knew how to play the game and keep under the radar (Mourão, 1997, pp. 75, 87). In her introductions to recently re-issued novels by Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Esther Schwartz-McKinzie shows how Ritchie exposed the debilitating effects of women's relationships with men in her novels and emphasised relationships among women even as she hewed to the marriage plot (see: Schwartz-McKinzie, 1997 and 1995; and Mourão, 1997, 2000 and 2001). Woolf herself notes that 'With all [Ritchie's] power of creating an atmosphere of tremulous shadows and opal tinted lights, with all her delight in the idyllic and the rapturous, the shapes of things are quite hard underneath and have, indeed, some surprisingly sharp edges' (*E*3, pp. 15–16), suggesting not only her own combination of granite and rainbow, but also some recognition of Ritchie's adept negotiation with her culture. As one of Virginia Stephen's teachers, then, Anne Thackeray Ritchie had an impact both direct and indirect. Ritchie embodied the professional writing woman, literally teaching Stephen what a professional writing woman acted like. She also passed along how one professional writing woman subtly critiqued her society without calling undue attention to her rebelliousness.

Anne Thackeray Ritchie may have had her greatest impact, though, on Virginia Stephen's, and later Virginia Woolf's, non-fiction. After all, Ritchie bequeathed numerous essays filled with linguistic and narrative strategies the novice could adapt to her own concerns and purposes. Since Ritchie had published her last novel, *Mrs. Dymond*, in 1885, the Ritchie Stephen knew was a writer of introductions, memoirs, essays, and biographical sketches. MacKay records that Ritchie worked steadily on her biographical introductions to the Biographical Edition of Thackeray's Works from 1894 to 1899 (MacKay, 1988, p. xv) and Hill-Miller, using evidence from Gérin, notes that this project 'obsessed her' (Hill-Miller, 1989, p. 382). Ritchie then substantially revised the introductions, with her daughter's help, from 1905 through 1910 for the Centennial Edition (MacKay, 1988, pp. xvii–xx). No wonder Woolf gently mocked Ritchie's involvement with Thackeray in her portrayal of Mrs. Hilbery – Ritchie's most intense absorption in Thackeray had coincided with Stephen's adolescence (from 12 to 17) and youth (from 23 to 28). Woolf's desire to *not* live through her father may have stemmed from Virginia Stephen's observation of Ritchie's absorption in Thackeray's life. So although she contributed a memory of her father to Frederic Maitland's 1903 biography, she seems to have declined

C. Ross Smith's request for assistance and information when he wrote to Woolf about writing a biography of Leslie Stephen.[7]

The wider extent of Ritchie's interests and career, however, was not lost on Virginia Stephen or on Virginia Woolf. Just as Woolf said she took down her father's *Hours in a Library* to read him 'medicinally' (*MB*, p. 115), Woolf could take down Ritchie's work to read her contextually. The Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf housed at Washington State University contains *The Works of Miss Thackeray* in eight volumes (which includes *Toilers and Spinsters*, a book of essays), along with many of her individual titles, including *A Book of Sibyls* and *From the Porch*, both non-fiction, so they could be consulted when a biographical detail or anecdote was needed (King and Miletic-Vejzovic, 2003, p. 187): 'Again and again', Woolf writes,

> it has happened to us to trace down our conception of one of the great figures of the past not to the stout official biography consecrated to him, but to some little hint or fact or fancy dropped lightly by Lady Ritchie in passing [. . .] She will be the unacknowledged source of much that remains in men's minds about the Victorian age. (*E*3, p. 18)

Sincerely admiring Ritchie, realising that her Aunt Anny differed from the other old aunts surrounding her (*D*1, pp. 247–8), and acknowledging Ritchie's talents for memoir – 'she invented an art of her own' (*E*3, p. 17) – Woolf also saw that Ritchie corrected her own tendency to portray the Victorian Age too simplistically: 'Seen through [Ritchie's] temperament, at once so buoyant and so keen, the gloom of that famous age dissolves in an iridescent mist' (*E*3, p. 399). Thus, Ritchie functioned as a corrective to Leslie Stephen.

Carol MacKay and Manuela Mourão both note how the content of "Toilers and Spinsters" anticipates Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, particularly in its calls for reading/dining rooms for women and in its insistence on lack of money being the cause of the spinster's woes, not spinsterhood itself (MacKay, 1987, p. 83; Mourão, 1997, p. 79). But Woolf may have borrowed Ritchie's tone of mild sarcasm as well, along with her use of repetition and piled-up questions and assertions. At one point, for example, Ritchie facetiously asks, 'But what have the ladies, thus acknowledging their need, been about all these years?' (Ritchie, 1876a, p. 3), asks eleven more questions, and then proceeds to list women's accomplishments:

> They have gone out to battle in top-boots, danced on the tight-rope, taken up the Italian cause, and harangued the multitudes. They have gone to prison for distributing tracts; they have ascended

> Mont Blanc, and come down again. They have been doctors, lawyers, clergywomen, squires – as men have been milliners, dressmakers, ballet-dancers, ladies' hair-dressers. They have worn waistcoats, shirt-collars, white neckcloths, wide-awakes. They have tried a hundred wild schemes, pranks, fancies; they have made themselves ridiculous, respected, particular, foolish, agreeable; and small blame to them if they have played their part honestly, cheerfully, and sincerely. (Ritchie, 1876a, pp. 4–5)

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf sarcastically asks her listeners, '[. . .] may I remind you [. . .] that in 1919 – which is a whole nine years ago – she was given a vote? May I also remind you that most of the professions have been open to you for close on ten years now?' (*AROO*, p. 112). Woolf's book may be more focused on obstacles to women's creativity than Ritchie's essay, as Mourão suggests (Mourão, 1997, p. 79), but it does catalogue women writers' achievements in the face of those obstacles. Ritchie notes that 'Old Maids, spinsters, the solitary, heart-broken women of England, have quite a literature of their own' (Ritchie, 1876a, p. 1), providing, along with Mill, a hint of the phrase Woolf would use for her book title. Perhaps more important, however, Ritchie uses a method Woolf will borrow for *A Room of One's Own*, doing research into that literature of the unmarried, consulting dozens and dozens of the books on the subject and then boiling them down into a representative, wry description. Ritchie notes the books 'without number', the 'Sunsets of spinster life, Moans of old maids, Words to the wasted, Lives for the lonely' (Ritchie, 1876a, p. 2), before letting some of her impatience at their 'melancholy, desponding spirit' creep into her description: '"Married life, indeed, has its troubles;" [. . .] "but then there is companionship, sympathy, protection" – one knows the sentence by heart' (Ritchie, 1876a, p. 3). Ritchie is not convinced.

Ritchie also seems to have been both the acknowledged and unacknowledged source for a great deal of what remained in Woolf's mind about the female literary tradition. Schwartz-McKinzie praises Ritchie's efforts to

> emphasise the importance of *women's* lives, struggles and accomplishments in a world that relentlessly associated greatness with masculinity. These efforts included documenting the lives of women artists (Mrs Barbauld, Amelia Opie, Felicia Felix [Mrs Hemans], Fanny Kemble and Angelica Kauffmann), who otherwise faced obscurity, [. . . and] reintroducing the works of her literary foremothers

> (Mary Russell Mitford, Elizabeth Gaskell and Maria Edgeworth). (Schwartz-McKinzie, 1997, p. x)

Woolf observed Ritchie's recovery strategies along with Ritchie's choices for female canonisation. According to Andrew McNeillie, Woolf quotes Ritchie in one of her essays on George Eliot (*E*4: pp. 171–2; p. 180, n. 8), contradicts and quotes Ritchie in her essay on Elizabeth Gaskell (*E*1, pp. 343, 344; p. 344, n. 11, 15), and uses two Ritchie sources for her essay on Julia Margaret Cameron (*E*4, pp. 385–6).[8] My examinations of their essay canons show that Woolf, following Ritchie, wrote about Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Julia Margaret Cameron, Maria Edgeworth, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Russell Mitford, Margaret Oliphant and Madame de Sévigné.[9]

In Woolf's essays on her foremothers, she sometimes expresses ideas similar to Ritchie's. Both note the oral quality of Sévigné's letters, for example. Ritchie writes in her book on *Madame de Sévigné* that 'After reading her letters, [. . .] we can almost hear her voice sounding in our ears across the two centuries of turmoil' (Ritchie, 1881, p. 2). Woolf, in her essay on the great letter writer, writes, 'But now and then with the sound of her voice in our ears and its rhythm rising and falling within us, we become aware [. . .] that we are, of course, being addressed by one of the great mistresses of the art of speech' (*CE*3, p. 68). For Ritchie, Madame de Sévigné's love for her daughter 'was a sentimental enthusiasm almost passing the bounds of reason' (Ritchie, 1881, p. 3); for Woolf, Madame de Sévigné's intensity of appetite is 'shown at its most extreme, its most irrational, in her love for her daughter' (*CE*3, p. 67). Ritchie contrasts France's starving people to the mistresses of the King 'stringing diamonds' (Ritchie, 1881, p. 2), and Woolf contrasts her sense of being within Europe's cultured and peaceful garden against her knowledge of a different reality: 'But what was happening outside?' (*CE*3, p. 70).

At other times, Woolf portrays a foremother with a language and a tone similar to Ritchie's. In their essays on Charlotte Brontë, for example, both focus on the autobiographical emotion pervading Brontë's work. Ritchie writes that *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, and *Villette*

> are each in turn biographies of Charlotte Brontë [. . .] told by her with that passion which coloured everything she touched. [. . .] She flashed her inspirations upon her readers, and all through the sadness of her life and its surroundings one realises the passionate love which pervaded it, both for the people who belonged to her, and the

> places and things to which she belonged. [. . .] The freehold of the fells and the moors was hers, and of the great Yorkshire vault overhead; and above all that eager heart was hers, throbbing in the little frail body. (Ritchie, 1913, pp. 14–15)

Woolf writes that at the end of *Jane Eyre*,

> we are steeped through and through with the genius, the vehemence, the indignation of Charlotte Brontë. Remarkable faces, figures of strong outline and gnarled feature have flashed upon us in passing; but it is through her eyes that we have seen them. [. . .] Think of Rochester [. . .] think of the moor [. . .], and [. . .] there is Jane Eyre. [. . .] [A]ll [Charlotte Brontë's] force, and it is the more tremendous for being constricted, goes into the assertion, 'I love', 'I hate', I suffer'. (*E*4, pp. 166–7)

Passages such as these reveal indirect correspondences, if not direct influence.

As MacKay notes about Ritchie and Woolf:

> they were alike in their habit of evoking the past and treating it as their subject. They both counted on memory and the inner voice that can still engage in dialogue with those long gone. And as avid journal-keepers and letter-writers, they were accustomed to trying to record actual conversations, so that the imaginary ones they 're-created' had the ring of truth. (MacKay, 1987, p. 82)

Margaret Atwood calls it 'negotiating with the dead' (Atwood, 2002), and the phrase aptly captures how these two writers relate to the literary tradition. Take their writings on Jane Austen, for example. Anne Thackeray Ritchie first wrote about Austen for *Cornhill Magazine* in 1871, and then reprinted her essay in *Toilers and Spinsters* in 1876 and, with some substantial revision, in *A Book of Sibyls* in 1883.[10] But she also wrote an essay on Austen more than a decade later for *Atalanta*, a magazine for young girls, an essay in which she assumes 'the young readers of *Atalanta* are not yet familiar with Miss Austen's books' (*A*1, p. 226). Woolf wrote about Austen four times in her career, first in a 1913 review of two books about Austen for the *TLS* on 8 May 1913 (*E*2, pp. 9–16); then in a review of *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen* for the *TLS* on 28 October 1920 (*E*3, pp. 268–71); next in a response to the first publication of Austen's juvenilia, including *Love and Friendship*, for

New Statesman on 15 July 1922 (*E*3, pp. 331–5); and finally, in a review of *The Works of Jane Austen* for *Nation and Athenaeum* on 15 December 1923 (*E*3, p. 393). For her essay on Austen in a volume of *The Common Reader*, she used the 1923 review as a foundation and drew on her earlier reviews (*CR*1, pp. 134–45; *E*4, pp. 146–57). In addition, Woolf included references to Austen in many other pieces of her nonfiction, including "How Should One Read a Book?" and *A Room of One's Own*.

Their assessments of Austen, of course, reflect their Victorian and modern sensibilities. Woolf focuses much more on Austen's bite, her mockery. Ritchie suggests that 'there is no malice in Jane Austen' (Ritchie 1876b, p. 116), whereas Woolf notes that 'sometimes it seems as if her creatures were born merely to give Jane Austen the supreme delight of slicing their heads off' (*E*4, 151). Ritchie includes more sentimental passages and lengthy quotations. Woolf has access to more of Austen's work, meaning she can use Austen's youthful attitude to capture something about Austen's work as a whole: 'The girl of fifteen is laughing, in her corner, at the world' (147). But the essays include some interesting similarities, even down to some of the same scenes, such as Tom Musgrave's sitting in a corner with oysters (Ritchie 1876b, p. 92; *E*4, p. 149) or Dr. Whewell's passionate reaction to hearing *Persuasion* described as dull (*A*1, p. 228; *E*4, pp. 153–4). Both writers emphasise Austen's characters and how real they seem; both discuss her creation of living worlds. Ritchie writes that 'All these people nearly start out of the pages, so natural and unaffected are they' in her first essay on Jane Austen (Ritchie 1876b, p. 86), and in her second, she says that 'the people are not characters described, but companions who have amused, distracted, or met us and entertained us all our lives long' (*A*1, p. 230). In her preface to *A Book of Sibyls*, she reports on hearing people at a luncheon discussing where Maple Grove is; we not only read Austen's scenes, she notes, but we live them (Ritchie 1876b, p. 95); and she places 'the dear, droll, witty, merry active inhabitants' of the novels into a place she calls 'Austen-land' (*A*1, p. 230). Woolf writes that Austen's

> characters are so rounded and substantial that they have the power to move out of the scenes in which she placed them into other moods and circumstances. Thus, if someone begins to talk about Emma Woodhouse or Elizabeth Bennet voices from different parts of the room begin saying which they prefer and why, and how they differ, and how they might have acted if one had been at Box Hill and the other at Rosings, and where they live, and how their houses are disposed, as if they were living people. It is a world, in short, with

> houses, roads, carriages, hedgerows, copses, and with human beings. (*E*2, p. 14)

In addition, both praise Austen's fools. Ritchie says Austen's 'very bores are delightful' (Ritchie 1876b, p. 85) and calls her anti-heroes, such as Mrs. Elton and Mr. Woodhouse, 'even more fascinating than [her] heroes' (*A*1, p. 230). Woolf writes how 'her heroes may be insipid, but think of her fools! [. . .] What a light the thought of them will cast on the wettest day! How various and individual is their folly!' (*E*2, p. 13).

Both dismiss the gossiping character of Austen criticism and insist on focusing on her books (though both weave information about Austen's life into their commentaries on her novels). Ritchie reports one reproach, 'that of a certain cynicism and coldness of temper and sympathy', but after having 'done my duty, and pointed out what objections objectors may find', asks to 'return to the delightful books themselves' (*A*1, p. 228). Woolf uses her review of Mary Augusta Austen-Leigh's *Personal Aspects of Jane Austen* to skewer 'the incorrigible stupidity of reviewers', report on some of their 'hissing inanities', catalogue the attacks on Austen's character (mentioning the same coldness Ritchie did), note that Austen-Leigh's defences of Austen do not always reflect the complexity of the truth about her, and throw a dagger at the geese: 'We remember that Jane Austen wrote novels. It might be worthwhile for her critics to read them' (*E*3, pp. 268–70). Both comment on Austen's craft, her superb art. Ritchie writes that Austen 'has a gift of telling a story in a way that has never been surpassed. She rules her places, times, characters, and marshals them with unerring precision' (Ritchie 1876b, p. 95), and 'this careful marshalling of people and circumstances was not chance, but careful workmanship' (Ritchie 1876b, p. 97). Woolf comments how underneath the 'likeness to life' and the 'exquisite discrimination of human values' lies a 'more abstract art which, in the ball-room scene [of *The Watsons*], so varies the emotions and proportions the parts that it is possible to enjoy it, as one enjoys poetry, for itself, and not as a link which carries the story this way and that' (*E*4, p. 150). Both comment on readers' reactions; Ritchie's comment about how Austen differs in different stages of the reader's life (*A*1, p. 230) may even find its way into Woolf's draft of "How Should One Read a Book?" where she suggests each generation reads a different *Pride and Prejudice* (Daugherty, 1998, p. 147).

Stylistic similarities exist as well. For example, both use lists, piling up phrases or clauses separated by semi-colons (Ritchie 1876b, pp. 95, 98–9; *A*1, p. 230; *E*4, p. 152). Both use metaphor effectively, with

Ritchie using painting to describe Austen's gifts for drawing and colour (Ritchie 1876b, pp. 97–8) and Woolf comparing the reputation of Jane Austen to the quilts and blankets that pile on top of us in the winter (*E*3, pp. 331–2). One can see what Woolf meant when she said that Ritchie has 'inimitable sentences' that 'rope together a handful of swiftly gathered opposites' (*E*3, p. 401); Ritchie writes: 'Dear books! [. . .] in which the homely heroines charm, the dull hours fly, and the very bores are delightful' (Ritchie 1876b, p. 85). Certain passages in Ritchie also leap out at the reader as samples of, according to Woolf, that 'apparently simple and yet inevitably right sense of the use of language' (*E*3, p. 15).

Both Ritchie and Woolf can be called feminists, though Ritchie perhaps more problematically. Both explore what lies beneath the surface of supposedly ordinary or obscure women. Both pay attention to letters and diaries and memoirs as sources and as genres. Both create vivid scenes and capture place and atmosphere and mood.[11] Both bring authors to life in order to illuminate writers' art. Both love to exaggerate and use fanciful facts. Both use anecdote and quotation and dialogue to enliven biographical fact. Both work through association or juxtaposition, create intimacy with the reader and try to draw the reader into a community. Both muse about the nature of books, the relationship between writer and reader, the experience of reading.[12]

The most important thing Anne Thackeray Ritchie may have done for Virginia Stephen, however, was bring *Atalanta*, a magazine for girls, into 22 Hyde Park Gate. *Atalanta* was published from 1887 until 1898 and edited by L. T. Meade (the pen name of Lucy Toulimin Smith), for the first six of those eleven years. Bound copies of *Atalanta*, volumes 2 and 4, are in the Library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf, and 'Miss Thackeray' contributed five articles to the first four volumes, spanning the years 1887 to 1891: an essay on Jane Austen (*A*1, pp. 226–30), two pieces on Maria Edgeworth (*A*2, pp. 57–61; 3: 13–15), a discussion of fashions in manner (A3, pp. 336–8), and an essay on the presence of fairies in English culture (*A*4, pp. 334–7). Although there is no inscription in the volumes, it is logical to suppose that Anne Thackeray Ritchie, rather than Leslie or Julia Stephen, gave the bound volumes to Leslie and/or the Stephen girls, *or* gave a subscription whose copies were later bound. It is also possible, though by no means certain, that all four volumes with Ritchie's contributions were once in Leslie Stephen's library, but that not all survived the bombing of the Woolf's house in Mecklenburgh Square. Finally, although it cannot be known one way or the other, it seems within the realm of possibility that some time between the ages

of 5 and 20, Virginia Stephen browsed through and read at least some issues of *Atalanta*. It is tempting to surmise that Virginia Stephen read *Atalanta* because the magazine opens a window onto changing attitudes about girls and women in the late nineteenth century, attitudes she would not have learned about in her home education.

More progressive early than late, the first few volumes of *Atalanta* reflect what Sally Mitchell says in "Girls' Culture: At Work":

> By the early years of the twentieth century, [. . .] advice manuals and mainstream periodicals used the language of moral imperative in precisely the opposite direction [from what it had done for most of the Victorian period]: when a girl leaves school, she 'must find work', either paid or unpaid, which will provide regular duties and teach her essential skills and habits that she cannot learn in the shelter of her family. (Mitchell, 1994, p. 243)

For example, L. T. Meade prefaces the regular "Employment for Girls" column started in volume one of *Atalanta* by stating that 'All girls ought to be so educated that should necessity arise they may be able either to support themselves or to help the family purse. In case of unexpected reverses such girls will be independent. [. . .] The girl [. . .] must take up and understand some one calling thoroughly' because she cannot make money as an amateur (*A*1, p. 63).[13] She also notes that girls now have more opportunities than just 'the badly-paid and over-crowded profession of teaching', and mentions upcoming papers on Nursing, Wood Engraving, Dressmaking and Millinery, Typewriting, Journalism, Chinapainting, Shorthandwriting, the Civil Service, and the different professions (*A*1, p. 63). That year's *Atalanta* also had a column on Pharmacy and two on Medicine. Meade's closing comments reflect the new moral imperative: 'When we work we bring out the best that is in us – when we work we help others' (*A*1, p. 63). The magazine's progressive nature can also be seen in articles on "Girls Who Won Success", and those 'girls' included Elizabeth Thompson, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Florence Lees and Mary Davies (*A*1). Its progressiveness can also be seen in the dialogue it promotes with its readers as it invites comment about the short essays in the "The Brown Owl" and in the inclusion of a wide variety of articles on various subjects, including science and sports: "Birds in London" (*A*2, pp. 139–42) and "Golf as a Pastime for Girls" [*A*4, pp. 792–4), for example. Although the early volumes of *Atalanta* included articles on 'feminine' topics like the art of pleasing, such articles were in the minority, appearing far less frequently than one might expect.[14]

Atalanta's editors and contributors clearly assumed that girls were serious, wanted knowledge and were eager to take advantage of increasing opportunities. They also assumed that the girls in its mainly middle-class audience were going to or had been to school,[15] something the young Virginia Stephen would have noticed. The magazine also addressed issues of girls' education, with articles such as L. Toulimin Smith's "What America Does for Her Girls" on the universities for women in the United States (*A*4, pp. 755–64) or "Schools in the Past" and "Schools Today" by Dorothea Beale (*A*3, pp. 259–61 and pp. 315–17). When R. K. Douglas wrote an article for the "Brown Owl" about his perception that higher education was destroying the feminine graces (*A*3, pp. 459–61), the editorial office was flooded with mail, almost all of it in protest. One letter writer, signing herself 'An Indignant One', begins her letter by saying: 'It does not seem to occur to Mr. Douglas that most women do not like the idea of being created solely for the use of man' and adds, 'If Nature does not mean us to cultivate our intellects, why are they given to us?' (*A*3, p. 586). Mr. Douglas was forced to write another article (*A*3, pp. 642–4), which seems to have served only to generate more indignant mail (*A*3, pp. 767–8).

Although the magazine directly discusses the need for girls to find work after their schooling, *Atalanta* also functions *as* a school by bringing schoolroom assignments and questions into the home. The "Atalanta Scholarship and Reading Union" offered a year-long coherent reading course, for example, complete with reading questions and essay topics and a contest. In one of the volumes Virginia Stephen may have read, the reading course includes Maria Edgeworth (written by Miss Thackeray), Washington Irving, John Keats, Robert Browning, Charlotte Brontë, Alfred Lord Tennyson, George Eliot and Matthew Arnold, amongst others. The two "Scholarship Competition Questions" for Edgeworth were:

> I. Voltaire says, *Le style, c'est l'homme*. Discuss this with reference to Miss Edgeworth.
> II. What do you judge to have been Miss Edgeworth's views respecting the art of fiction? Support your answer from any of her books. [. . .]
>
> Total number of words in no case to exceed 500. (*A*2, p. 62)

An example of one such prizewinning essay, on a different topic, is Gladys E. Meyrick's "Humour and Pathos are Closely Akin"

(*A*3, pp. 390–1). The magazine included articles on art, science, literature, music, history, education (including one on home education) and different cultures through its "A Girl's Life in . . . " series; the latter series covered South Australia, for example (*A*3, pp. 669–70), and Greece and Russia, amongst others (*A*4, pp. 796–8). It promoted analysis of English literature through its monthly search passages; the task was to send in the author and the work for each quoted passage. References for the September 1888 search passages were from Longfellow, Wordsworth, Bulwer Lytton, Coleridge, Milton and Hood (*A*2, p. 62). It featured 'how-to' articles, including Walter Besant's two-part series on "The Writing of Novels" (*A*1, pp. 163–7 and pp. 370–5), "How an American Girl Became a Journalist" by Sara Jeanette Duncan (*A*3, pp. 91–4), and a Brown Owl column by Professor A. J. Church on what a girl's library should contain (*A*4, pp. 475–7), a column that also generated a great deal of mail and many alternative suggestions.

Although Virginia Stephen's library was at first determined by gifts other people gave her, and although it seems to have been different from those proposed in the pages of *Atalanta* (more Greek works, for example, and numerous Pater and Leslie Stephen titles), the assumption that girls could create their own libraries, could even disagree with the authorities on the content of such a library, were lessons that the young woman would have taken to heart. *Atalanta*, then, would have made Virginia Stephen even more aware of what she was missing by being educated at home. At the same time, it would have provided her with some of the education that girls who attended school gained, not only in terms of curriculum and pedagogical 'how-to' articles, but also in terms of contact with other reading girls, if only through print. It showed her what women could do in publishing. In the home of an eminent Victorian man of letters, a monthly column title told her that there were English men *and women* of letters. And the table of contents told her women like her Aunt Anny could, in turn, write about those women of letters. It gave her numerous examples of a wide variety of essays. Its conversational style and democratic inclusion of readers' responses through its discussion-oriented approach would also have provided Virginia Woolf with an early dialogic model for her reviews and essays.

During the home education that constituted much of her apprenticeship, Virginia Stephen informally studied under Anne Thackeray Ritchie, a teacher who enlarged her world beyond 22 Hyde Park Gate. Ritchie modelled a professional writing life devoted to exposing women writers to readers and she was a teacher who taught Woolf something

about the 'inevitably right sense of the use of language' (*E*3, pp. 14–15). Ritchie gave the young Virginia vicarious access to the schoolroom and to other schoolgirls, which she would otherwise never have had. Writing in the essay "Lady Ritchie" (1919), Virginia Woolf ponders: 'How is it possible that a writer capable of such wit, such fantasy, marked by such a distinct and delightful personality, is not at least as famous as Mrs Gaskell, or as popular as Anthony Trollope? How has she escaped notice all these years?' (*E*3, p. 13). Woolf points to a fate often suffered by women writers. But because Ritchie taught Woolf the obligation to remember one's foremothers and a strategy for doing so, Woolf not only wrote *A Room of One's Own*, but also used Ritchie's lessons in her own non-fiction and wrote three essays about Ritchie's gifts.[16] As a result, Woolf fulfilled her obligation to her teacher and kept Ritchie in front of readers until the time was right for Ritchie to once again be considered as an author on her own merits.[17]

Notes

1. This chapter has been part of research a project entitled *The Education of a Woman Writer: Virginia Woolf's Apprenticeship*. I presented papers on various facets of Virginia Stephen's home schooling at the annual conferences on Virginia Woolf, and some of these presentations have been published in volumes of selected conference papers. I thank Stuart Clarke for his bibliographical help, Marion Dell for good conversation and information, and the late Julia Briggs for her encouragement. I also thank Ann Barton, Linda McFadden, Lugene Schemper, Carl Peterson and Meredith Gillies for their long-distance reference assistance. Patti Rothermich and Allen Reichert helped me find obscure items, for which I am very grateful.
2. Anne Thackeray Ritchie was actually aunt by blood only to Laura Stephen.
3. In this regard, see Anne Thackeray Ritchie's essay, "Fairies in the Box," in *Atalanta* and Woolf's use of a fairy in "Jane Austen Practising" (*E*3, pp. 33–4).
4. Anny even tried to 'anticipate and dispel the inevitable recitation of misery' she knew he would go through when she visited him during his last illness. He may have been dying, but she tweaked him about his catalogue of complaints. 'Well, Leslie', she said on entering his sick room, 'Damn – Damn – DAMN!' (Fuller and Hammersley, 1951, p. 156; see also A. Bell, 1977, p. xxv). As Garnett notes, she 'succeeded in making him laugh instead of groan. No one else would have dared' (Garnett, 2004, p. 272).
5. Debenham, in placing Ritchie's work for the *Cornhill* within the context of the larger market, disagrees with Harris's assessment of Ritchie's influence at the magazine.
6. Leslie Stephen noted her habit of pinning notes to her manuscripts in his *Mausoleum Book* (Stephen, 1977, p. 14), and Woolf uses the story and a quotation of his comparing Ritchie to Austen in her 1919 obituary essay (*E*3, pp. 16–17).

7. See the letter dated 10 May 1939 in the Monks House Papers at the University of Sussex, SxMs 18, Letters III, Box 78, Letters from agents, editors, publishers, etc., folder labelled Fan Mail. No reply to C. Ross Smith, University of Pennsylvania, exists in Woolf's published letters, but given her usual practice, she probably replied; in any case, Smith did not publish a biography of Leslie Stephen.
8. If Woolf read "Reminiscences" by Ritchie in *Lord Tennyson and His Friend* (1893), she would have seen the sentence about the Cameron household's 'unconventional rules for life' and the explanatory footnote: the family was decidedly peculiar in their 'respect for their own time'. The women in the house did not follow the customary rules, did not 'live in public' and 'utterly ignored' visitors (Ritchie, 1983, p. 13).
9. See also MacKay, 1987, p. 83.
10. Excerpts from the 1871 *Cornhill Magazine* essay also appear in the "Criticisms and Interpretations" section preceding *Pride and Prejudice* in volume 3 of *The Harvard Classics Shelf of Fiction* (Eliot, 1917, pp. 152–5).
11. For example, Ritchie uses weather to describe the connection between the age and a writer when she points out that 'Jane Austen's literary hour must have been a midday hour: bright, unsuggestive, with objects standing clear, without much shadow or elaborate artistic effect' (Ritchie, 1974, p. 208). Woolf similarly uses a contrast in weather to support her contrast of Greek and English literature in "On Not Knowing Greek" (*CR*1, pp. 24–5).
12. About the latter, for example, Ritchie writes in "Heroines and Their Grandmothers" that 'The imaginary Public is a most sympathizing friend' (Ritchie, 1876b, p. 146), anticipating Woolf's comment that readers 'cannot be too sympathetic as friends' in "How Should One Read a Book?" (*CR*2, p. 267). In her essay on Jane Austen in *A Book of Sibyls*, Ritchie writes, 'It is difficult, reading the novels of succeeding generations, to determine how much each book reflects of the time in which it was written; how much of its character depends upon the mind and the mood of the writer. The greatest minds, the most original, have the least stamp of the age' (Ritchie, 1974, p. 208). Woolf would later ask, in "How Should One Read a Book?", 'How far [. . .] is a book influenced by its writer's life – how far is it safe to let the man interpret the writer?' (*CR*2, p. 263); she would also point out that 'the newness of new poetry and fiction is its most superficial quality' (*CR*2, p. 267).
13. These statements sound remarkably like Leslie Stephen's point in his argument with Julia about their daughters' education:

> Laura, for example, ought to learn something thoroughly when she grows up, thoroughly enough to be able to make her living at it, if it is of the paying kind, as to be an authority on it, if it is not. [. . .] I hate to see so many women's lives wasted simply because they have not been trained well enough to take an independent interest in any study or to be able to work effectively at any profession [. . .] The only real advantage of a man's education is that he learns something professionally instead of being an amateur in everything. And what I want for Laura is that she should have the same sort of advantage in case of need. (Stephen, 1996, pp. 214–15)

However, Leslie lost the argument, and his daughters were educated at home.

14. Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman choose to reprint "On Housekeeping", a Brown Owl column from the 4th volume of *Atalanta*, in their *Victorian Women's Magazines: An Anthology* (Beetham and Boardman, 2001, pp. 75–7). Whereas the preponderance of articles on non-traditional subjects made such a column seem atypical to me, they interpreted its inclusion differently, noting that although 'new activities like sport' were taking up more space in such magazines, traditional subjects were still discussed (Beetham and Boardman, 2001, p. 75). In their introduction to the section of magazines for young women and girls, they do note that the 'strides of the Victorian women's movement can be seen in the definition of girlhood constructed' in magazines such as *Girl's Own Paper* and *Atalanta*. 'Although still in training to be a wife and mother', they write, 'late Victorian girls are seen as able to consider work opportunities, university education and sport as options for their pre-marital years' (Beetham and Boardman, 2001, p. 71).
15. L. T. Meade was well-known as a prolific writer of girls' books, and she established the girls' school story in 1886 with her *A World of Girls*. See Mavis Reimer's work for more information about Meade, the genre of the girls' school story, and its explosion during this time period.
16. MacKay contends that Ritchie kept herself at the forefront in essays about other women writers 'almost as if she were providing proof that they lived anew in her' (MacKay, 1990. p. 77).
17. Henrietta Garnett's biography of *Anny* appeared in 2004, and John Aplin is publishing a scholarly one. A more accurate bibliography is needed for any new critical assessment of Anne Thackeray Ritchie's canon. Other than a mistaken reference to *Atalanta* as an American magazine in Gérin's biography (Gérin, 1983, p. 224), for example, no one includes Ritchie's *Atalanta* articles in her bibliography, and Lillian Shankman's bibliography, the most thorough available currently, lists only '*Selected* Periodical and Newspaper Publications'. Jennie Huie's 1961 dissertation about Ritchie, along with her archives at the University of London Library and the University of Toronto Victoria Library, may provide additional information for such a bibliography, including Ritchie's publishing venues outside of *Cornhill*.

4

Mapping the Ghostly City: Cambridge, *A Room of One's Own* and the University Novel

Anna Bogen

Virginia Woolf's response to her audience of young women when she went to Cambridge in the autumn of 1928 to give the lectures that would eventually become *A Room of One's Own* is self-consciously cantankerous, and also displays evidence of a grudging admiration. She writes in her diary how she felt elderly and mature, 'And nobody respected me. They were very eager, egotistical, or rather not much impressed by age & repute. Very little reverence or that sort of thing about' (*D*3, p. 201). The few recorded responses to her talk, now largely passed into their own mythology, interestingly express a not dissimilar kind of ambivalent admiration. Kathleen Raine, impressed by Woolf and her stylish companion Vita Sackville-West, famously called them 'the two most beautiful women I had ever seen', describing them as 'entirely removed from the context of what is usually called "real" life, as if they had descended like goddesses from Olympus' (Rosenbaum, 1998, p. xviii). At least as well-known as Raine's account is that of her fellow Girtonian, Muriel Bradbrook, later one of Woolf's fiercest critics, who diplomatically wrote in *My Cambridge* that that 'her Cambridge was not ours' (Bradbrook, 1977, p. 50). Bradbrook describes Girton in alternative literary terms. First, in those of Rosamond Lehmann, whose novel *Dusty Answer* was published the year before Woolf's talk, and then in those of L. T. Meade's popular book *A Sweet Girl Graduate* (1886). Whether admiring or scornful, contemporary responses to the lectures illuminate the boundaries between Woolf and her audience, boundaries that not only separated Woolf, as the consummate Londoner, from provincial Cambridge, but also, at least from Bradbrook's point of view, separated her from a literary community, that, however lowbrow, appeared to hold a monopoly on university commentary. Contemporary critical views of Woolf as a modernist writer who championed the fluid possibilities of

the metropolis against the static, exclusionary spaces of Oxbridge are an incarnation of this viewpoint. And despite valuable work that has sought to re-direct attention towards Woolf's Cambridge connections, this opposition remains central to much of Woolf criticism.[1]

Using Bradbrook's memoir as a starting point, I shall examine the relation between London and Cambridge in *A Room of One's Own,* and, in so doing, illuminate the textual relationship between Woolf and university literature. I aim to demonstrate that the impulse behind Bradbrook's characterisation has perhaps been taken too much at face value; that in *A Room of One's Own,* at least, Woolf's use of textual strategies is not only reminiscent of university literature, but also goes a long way towards deconstructing this opposition between city and university.

Virtually no detail of Woolf's biography has been left unexamined, and her personal connections to Cambridge through family members and friends are well-documented; from the distinguished academic careers of her father Leslie Stephen and her cousin Katharine Stephen (president of Newnham College, 1911–1920) to the genesis of the Bloomsbury Group via the circle of young Apostles, befriended by her brother Thoby, and later through her nephew, Julian Bell, and John Lehmann, amongst others, who she would, in fact, go on to critique in "The Leaning Tower". Woolf's ambivalence about her own lack of higher education is also well-documented, and that ambivalence makes itself felt in many of her works, particularly the overtly critical book, *Three Guineas*. It is notable that when Woolf did bite back at Bradbrook after the *Scrutiny* group criticised both this work and *A Room of One's Own,* her criticism ironically took its form from this very ambivalence, leaving Bradbrook both envied and condemned by the phrase: 'She is young, Cambridge, ardent' (*D*4, p. 101). The university itself had become an adjective with multi-layered meanings, which critics continue to unpick. It is certainly safe to say that by the time *A Room of One's Own* was written, it would have already been possible to identify Cambridge, at least, as one of the places that, as Angela Ingram puts it, was destined to 'loom monumentally' over her life, as well as her writing (Ingram, 1987, p. 125).

If Cambridge was monumentally looming over Woolf's groundbreaking experimental fiction in the 1920s, however, it was gaining similar ground in the arena of popular fiction. The early twentieth century saw an explosion of romantic novels about young men and women at Oxford and Cambridge, particularly publicised in 1914 by the scandal that dogged publication of Compton Mackenzie's *Sinister Street,*[2] thrusting novels of university life into the public eye. The genre does, of

course, precede the twentieth century; university fiction has been traced back to Chaucer's 'Clerk of Oxenford' and to a wide range of works that feature episodes set in the world of town or gown. The 'university novel' that gained ground in the early twentieth century, however, was overwhelmingly the story of the Oxford or Cambridge undergraduate. These realist, often naïve accounts were only overtaken by the faculty comedies that became popular after the Second World War, and the publication of influential works by authors like Kingsley Amis and C. P. Snow. Taking their cue from late-nineteenth-century accounts like William Thackeray's *Pendennis,* which coined the term 'Oxbridge' in 1849, Thomas Hughes' saccharine *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861), and H. N. Dickinson's popular Oxford novel *Keddy* (1907), most pre-World War II university fiction followed a single character through university career and often included stock episodes involving college life, romantic friendship and a carefully limited amount of mildly decadent posing. By the time that *A Room of One's Own* was published, most university writers were tracing remarkably similar lines of plot and theme, reiterating what Virginia Morris has called, describing Dorothy L. Sayers, a 'tired elitist formula' (Morris, 1983, p. 494). Gerard Hopkins' tortured novel of 1921, *A City in the Foreground,* perhaps best exemplifies the general thrust. *A City in the Foreground* is the story of Hugh Kenyon, an undergraduate at a barely fictionalised Balliol College, whose search for the 'essential Oxford' takes him on an increasingly detailed route through classics, politics, art, poetry and social life. Hopkins' novel is typical in its documentary appeal and broad focus, but more significantly in its determinedly ordinary protagonist, whose experience is at all times, often with some desperation, cast as representative. Books like Hopkins' portray an increasingly narrow range of authorial options to the reader, characterised by an overwhelming desire to get the Oxbridge experience 'right', to obtain and display what Renée Haynes' 1928 novel *Neapolitan Ice* called 'badges' of belonging (Haynes, 1928, p. 44).

The genre was not restricted to male writers. Although women's experiences at Oxbridge were by necessity very different from men's,[3] female university novelists were scarcely less prolific than their male counterparts; L. T. Meade, cited by Bradbrook, had written three 'Oxbridge' novels by 1920,[4] and in 1923 Vera Brittain's novel *The Dark Tide* gained a press notoriety rivalling Mackenzie's with its voyeuristic portrayal of Somerville.[5] *The Dark Tide* was followed by Lehmann's *Dusty Answer,* which became an immediate bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic. Lehmann herself said of her novel that its popularity represented 'one of those curious explosions of zeitgeist'

(Seigel, 1989, p. 76) and a surge of post-war interest in upper-class life at the ancient universities meant that the fiction capitalising on such an interest created a language for talking about the university experience that was quickly assimilated into the public vocabulary. This phenomenon was recognised with some alarm by Marjorie Nicolson, writing in the *Yale Review,* who, describing herself and her colleagues as 'decidedly embarrassed' by the recent spate of revelatory fiction, admitted that 'we of the academic world find that we have become "news" [. . .] authors, professional and amateur, can actually *sell* novels and articles about us' (Nicholson, 1930, p. 775). Nicolson's unquestioned assumption that the feared 'invisible camera' on campus could be equally well-wielded by a novelist or a journalist reveals the extent to which fictional accounts were given the same consideration as non-fictional ones; by the mid-thirties, what Q. D. Leavis would scornfully call 'peepshows' of the academic world (Leavis, 1983, p. 303) were frequently being regarded as at least semi-reliable documentary sources,[6] praised according to their ability to show the reader, as Max Beerbohm remarked of *Sinister Street,* 'what each term was really like' (Linklater, 1992, p. 131). Indeed, Muriel Bradbrook herself later dedicated part of her history of Girton College to its fictional representations, claiming their importance not only in exposing 'the social assumptions made about women's education,' but also acknowledging their ability to 'shape the institution itself,' if only to rebellion (Bradbrook, 1969, p. 191). Even today, cultural histories and guidebooks freely quote from *Sinister Street* or *Brideshead Revisited* while many collections of self-consciously nostalgic university memorabilia, such as the *Oxford Book of Oxford,* rely heavily on fictionalised sources in what can appear to be a dizzyingly self-referential, insider-focused methodology.

For Woolf, therefore, the popularity of university fiction would have been an inescapable public context, as it would have been for any writer looking to take on the monolith of higher education in print. Thus while Woolf's own short piece of 'university fiction', excised from *Jacob's Room,* 'A Woman's College from the Outside', might seem a more appropriate choice for a comparison, the mixture of fact and fiction inherent in the discourse of academic fiction bears more similarity to *A Room of One's Own.* With its subversion of the traditional essay form, as well as its meditations on class, education and gender, *A Room* invites examination in the light of the conventions of Oxbridge writing.[7] Moreover, the complex relationship that exists within university fiction between 'insider' and 'outsider' points of view makes *A Room,* whose relations to these identities is deliberately both changeable and slightly hostile,

interestingly akin to the often much less skilful efforts of university novelists. That Woolf should be treated as an 'outsider' when she came to speak at Girton is perhaps less surprising if we consider the grounds upon which the *Oxford Magazine* dismissed Cuthbert Bede's 1853 novel *The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green, an Oxford Freshman* as 'not quite' an Oxford novel; according to the magazine, the book's myriad explanatory footnotes gave away that fact that its author had in fact only graduated from Durham (G.O.W., 1915, p. 109).[8] University fiction not only told of an insider world – John Lehmann, describing his sister's bestseller, grandly claimed on behalf of his Cambridge generation that '*Dusty Answer* was our book' (J. Lehmann, 1955, p. 129) – but, apparently, required an author from the inside to do its subject justice.[9]

For Woolf, defining herself as the consummate outsider, such a setting was of necessity both personally and politically charged, and it is most often this charged evocation of Cambridge that readers remember from *A Room of One's Own,* a striking setting through which the narrator and her argument proceed, alternating in what Rachel Bowlby has identified as 'progressive' and 'transgressive' modes of *flânerie* (Bowlby, 1997, p. 194). In contemporary academia, analysis of these settings is inevitably complicated by intimate knowledge of the progression of Woolf's writing career, which cites the 'real' lectures she gave in Cambridge as the direct inspiration for the textual *A Room,* so that, in a sense, the text we read in book form is directly inspired by the very lecture that it claims to represent. The biographical connections that make up what Rosenbaum has described as the 'mythology' of *A Room of One's Own* (Rosenbaum, 1992, p. xvi) make it easy to miss the crucial fictionality of the text, a point that Woolf makes explicitly clear a few pages in: 'I need not say that what I am about to describe has no existence; Oxbridge is an invention; so is Fernham' (*AROO*, p. 4). This famous passage, a disingenuous attempt to warn off the reader, often has the opposite effect, suggesting to the reader the existence of an essential 'truth' about Cambridge; fiction will be used to illuminate fact, just as a novel can tell us what every term is really like. Woolf continues to embed fictionality in her text by her deliberate use of the term 'Oxbridge'. By now ubiquitous, this term is in itself an example of university fiction's hold on the real world, originating in Thackeray's *Pendennis,* from which Woolf would famously later borrow the idea of 'Arthur's Education Fund' in *Three Guineas*. That this fictionalisation was a deliberate strategy is evidenced by early drafts of *A Room of One's Own*, in which Cambridge and its colleges appear undisguised. Thus the beginning of the text relies on the conventions of fiction to present

'real' Cambridge as fictional 'Oxbridge', a term that, through myriad associations, elevates the university to the status of an ideal. By using the term 'Oxbridge', Woolf, like the writers who had invoked it before her, signals to the reader a readiness to engage, through the structures of the novel, with a contemporary myth.

Woolf's fictionalising signals are complicated by the fact that early-twentieth-century university fiction relies upon a view of the university that sets it in contrast with the outside world, specifically with metropolitan London. Oxbridge fiction relies upon London to be the university's consistent Other, a structural feature that usually relied on the assumption that London would be the protagonist's childhood home and future adult residence, thus isolating the university as a key psychological experience within a generalised metropolitan surround. Again *Sinister Street,* as the typical university novel of the era, takes full advantage of this technique, isolating its protagonist's time at Oxford within a section appropriately called 'Dreaming Spires,' surrounded on one side by his London childhood, on the other by the London of his mature adult life. While the two never meet – both author and protagonist guard against one 'contaminating' the other – the maturity that Michael finds in the second London is only possible because of the growth experienced within the cocooned world of Oxbridge. This structure features consistently in other university novels; while a few attempt to modify it – particularly as the distance between 'town' and Oxbridge shrank rapidly after the invention of the motor-car – it remains one of the most reliable structural indications of the genre. By defining Oxbridge against London, university fiction was able to stress what could be described as Oxbridge's 'historical timelessness'. For the university novel, Cambridge or Oxford had to be both historically constituted – literally 'made' by generations of previous inhabitants – and universalised into an educational experience, in order to justify the orderly but impermanent progress of each new generation through their gates. Opposed to the modernity of London was a place haunted by what William Hazlitt called the ghostly 'throng of intellectual shapes' (Dougill, 1998, p. 141), possessing both chronological history and apparently timeless universal value.

In view of its opening, it is therefore scarcely surprising that *A Room of One's Own*'s 'Oxbridge' bears a great resemblance to the universalised but historical Oxbridge of university fiction. The narrator's description of King's College chapel captures this tension: 'The outside of the chapel remained. As you know, its high domes and pinnacles can be seen, like a sailing-ship always voyaging never arriving, lit up at night and visible

for miles, far away across the hills' (*AROO*, p. 9). Angela Ingram has pointed out the similarity of this imagery to architectural guidebooks (Ingram, 1987, p. 135); it also brings to mind numerous examples from the more purple passages of university fiction.[10] Suggesting the isolation of the Oxbridge experience through the closed-in world of the voyaging ship, the image also indicates continuity between past and present, but with a notable absence of the future: rather than 'arrive', the ship will merely continue sailing, thus perpetuating historical continuity without the necessity of change. Woolf's famous description of the layers of money that underlie the foundations of Oxbridge strengthens this theme: streams of gold and silver are balanced against the historical progress marked out by the identification of specific historical moments, the Age of Faith and the Age of Reason. The vision of Oxbridge's development significantly runs up to the present – the libraries and laboratories of today are contrasted with the wild grassland of the past – but the thread of progress is deliberately snapped off, as the narrator's musings are cut short by the striking clock and the necessity of lunch (*AROO*, pp. 9–10). The progress of the historical past is transmuted into a different kind of time, that of the circular, infinitely repeatable time of the daily schedule, cutting off the expected movement from present to future. The famous luncheon-scene at the male college displays a similar textual strategy; the meal is a careful balance of the progressive and the timeless. Dishes appearing on the table in turn are balanced by the evocation of an almost atemporal dreamlike contentment, symbolised by the circular repetition created by wineglasses being filled and emptied again and again (*AROO*, p. 11). Even in the wild gardens of Fernham history and universality seem to coexist, and the ghostly appearance of Jane Harrison suggests that even here in this new college, the narrator cannot escape from tradition and timelessness, even if other marks of equal status are consistently absent.

In university fiction, particularly of the post-Freudian variety, such qualities are usually cited as a means of psychological comfort – by keeping Oxbridge, as *Sinister Street* puts it, 'imprisoned in a crystal globe' of aesthetic timelessness (Mackenzie, 1949, p. 456), the undergraduate could move on into the 'real' world of London. While Woolf's narrator clearly leaves Oxbridge with more eagerness than nostalgia, I believe that Woolf nevertheless makes use of the contrast implied in this trope, setting up the perceived impersonality of Oxbridge in direct contrast to London, where most of *A Room of One's Own* is actually set. If Woolf's Cambridge is abstract and isolated, her London is, at least to first viewing, incredibly concrete. Here devices of fictionalisation are deliberately

resisted, as the narrator, through the British Museum, Hampstead Heath or Admiralty Arch, indulges herself in the act of naming. While in Cambridge Woolf's narrator is constantly looking to the past, London is overwhelmingly identified with the present, pinpointed by the mention of an exact date: October 26, 1928 (*AROO*, p. 95). Within the London chapters, excursions to the past happen only within the contained space of the author's bookshelf. The only major exception to this general pattern comes when the narrator describes her inheritance of a legacy from her aunt, and this episode makes clear the very different textual strategies in play. Free of the elaborate and abstract language of the 'historical' Oxbridge passages, here the event is full of individual detail, describing not 'rivers' of gold and silver but the aunt's idiosyncratic life and death. Money here suggests not historical continuity, but the possibility of a new and different future. The urban setting of the restaurant in which the event is recalled is thus deliberately associated with change rather than continuity. Whenever the narrator changes a ten-shilling note, courtesy of her aunt, what she sees as the 'rust and corrosion' of poverty is rubbed off and 'fear and bitterness go' (*AROO*, p. 38).

Woolf's London is thus very different from her Cambridge, scarcely a surprising conclusion. Whilst I have shown that its temporal and spatial specificity is reminiscent of the structures of university fiction, however, during the London chapters, Woolf's text also presents challenges to this imaginative paradigm. At the same time that Woolf manipulates what were by now stereotypical oppositions between university and city, she seeks to undermine them by periodically disrupting her own faux-naif opposition. The London of *A Room of One's Own* does not just define Oxbridge, but rather modifies and extends it through a series of temporal and spatial shifts. The narrator, for example, is only able to think clearly about Oxbridge while being physically present in London, a technique that ensures that some of Woolf's most famous denunciations of Oxbridge privilege, for example her attack on Oscar Browning, take place within the London chapters. References like these bring Oxbridge into the heart of London, destroying the image of isolated unity suggested by King's College Chapel. While one could argue that this type of spatial displacement is entirely metaphorical, I think it is significant that Woolf not only uses the language of space to craft her metaphors, but that she abandons at the same time the language of fictionality. When she denounces Oscar Browning, she does so in real-world terms: he lectures specifically at Girton and Newnham, not 'Fernham,' and the use of their proper names begins to suggest that a 'true' Cambridge can only be discussed outside of its own literal space.[11]

If the real names of Cambridge can be uttered only in the spatially and temporally concrete London, so too can other aspects of Cambridge previously impossible to represent. From the relative safety of present-day London, the narrator is at last able to posit the existence of a *future* Cambridge. Just as historical Cambridge lies beneath foundations of the modern university, future Cambridge haunts the narrator's present-day London. This is accomplished through a steady repetition of a particular image: the potential books written by future scholars of Girton and Newnham. The physical space of London seems to free the narrator to imagine these women producing works on psychology, women's history and the history of chastity. Woolf is careful to couch these future works in terms of the possible rather than the certain; a topic merely 'suggests itself for discussion, and might provide an interesting book if any student at Girton or Newnham cared to go into the matter' (*AROO*, p. 64). While the future at Oxbridge was consistently cut off by the interruption of circular time, the future Cambridge as posited within London is neither limited nor limiting; Woolf's use of 'might' breaks the deadlock of circularity while refusing to cut off the possibility of an alternative ending.

If present-day London is haunted by the existence of Cambridge, both in the past and future, what does this say about Woolf's previous use of the opposition between the two? It is interesting to look at the text's conclusion in this light, in which a similar balancing of temporal and spatial elements takes place. The circularity implied by the conceit of the 'lecture' is in fact disrupted by a significant temporal difference. While the narrator claims to reveal her conclusion at the text's opening – that a woman must have money and a private room in order to write – the closing of the text takes this a step further, predicting its corollary, the birth of the great woman writer. Here, instead of a Cambridge future posited within London, we have an international, universal future posited within Cambridge. When the remains buried at the Elephant and Castle are, as it were, disinterred within the Cambridge of Woolf's lecture, the history of Cambridge previously 'imprisoned in a crystal globe' disseminates outwards to create a joint future in which the opposition between city and university has itself broken down.

By positioning London as a space from which to create a future Cambridge, Woolf gradually breaks down the division that university literature, and her own text, had taken for granted. As such, this breakdown has a lot to say not only about the relation of women and fiction, but about the relation of Woolf to the institution she describes. Woolf's textual strategies, often read as an attack, can also be seen in the

more ambivalent light of textual appropriation. Denied the experience of Cambridge as a young woman, she manipulates the conventions of university writing to create her own version of textual Cambridge, marked by an explosion of a generally accepted dichotomy between the university and the city. Raine and Bradbrook's recognition of Woolf's outsider status is thus only half the story; Woolf's own textual strategies provide a challenge to the notion that only a literal insider like Lehmann could adequately comment on the university experience. In addition, the resentment recorded among university insiders has gained an ironic dimension over time. With the fame of *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf's 'Oxbridge' is by far more well-known than any other piece of university writing; if she never made it into the real world of Cambridge, her essay has paradoxically taken its place at the head of a 'canon' of university literature. As Graham Chainey points out, it is now Woolf herself who is seen as 'casting a literary glow' over Cambridge (Chainey, 1985, p. 171); and today, for those studying university fiction, it is Woolf, the outsider, who is required reading.

Notes

1. Critics have commented on Woolf's 'outsider' perspective on the university. Both S. P. Rosenbaum and Jane Marcus focus on the reactions of Raine and Bradbrook to Woolf's lecture, locating in their hostility (and that of Queenie Roth, later to be Q. D. Leavis) a post-*Well of Loneliness* uneasiness with the lesbian overtones of both the 'Chloe and Olivia' sections of *AROO* and the Girton sections of Lehmann's novel, which Marcus traces back to the 'Sapphic primal scene of Woolf's lecture at Girton' (Marcus, 1996, p. 32). Certainly *Dusty Answer* was treated in many quarters as a proto-lesbian text (Lehmann herself ironically likened her sudden notoriety to posing on the stage of the Albert Hall with no clothes on (R. Lehmann, 1984, p. 513)), but the novel is also very typical of university fiction of the period, in which a similarly ambiguous focus on same-sex relations is common. For more discussions about Woolf's troubled relationship with Cambridge, see Lynne T. Hanley's "Virginia Woolf and the Romance of Oxbridge" (1984) and Patrick McGee's "Woolf's Other: the University in her Eye" (1990).
2. *Sinister Street*, published first in 1913, caught the attention of the circulating libraries, which initially refused to buy it on the grounds of a suggestive scene in the first volume, a refusal Mackenzie exploited with a canny sense for publicity. For a few weeks, a controversy raged in the pages of the *Daily Mail*. While the paper supported him wholeheartedly, reviewing his book in a column leader and allowing him to print a diatribe against the circulating libraries, it also drew attention to the racy nature of the controversy by headlining the article "Sex Problem Books." Within the *Mail*'s own review, a somewhat voyeuristic attitude towards the universities emerged, which connected

the exclusivity of the undergraduate experience with the book's reputation for attractive sexual daring. The resulting publicity and eventual capitulation of the libraries led to Mackenzie's book selling over half a million copies and remaining consistently in demand on library shelves. Joseph McAleer has pointed out that the early twentieth century saw a public dependence upon popular fiction for entertainment purposes, not equalled before or since, largely because of the sway of circulating libraries (McAleer, 1991, p. 99). The scandal accompanying *Sinister Street,* which was directly echoed by Brittain and Lehmann's books in the twenties, demonstrates the widening scope of university fiction. Woolf could hardly have been unaware of *Sinister Street,* having reviewed several of Mackenzie's later novels for the *TLS*, including *The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlet* (1918) and *Sinister Street*'s loose sequel *Sylvia and Michael* (1919).

3. Women have been enrolled at Oxford and Cambridge for a short time compared to men, but much longer than some critics assume. The cultural stereotype of the 'Girton Girl' or 'undergraduette' often seems like a creation of the nineteen-thirties, but by then female students were already well-established at both of the ancient universities, where they had been since 1869, when the 'Girton pioneers' took over a rented house at Hitchin, near Cambridge. Moreover, a lively debate about women's higher education had been going on for decades, and, by the late nineteenth century, had seen results. By 1869 women had been admitted to most university extension lectures and Working Men's Colleges, and independent Ladies' Educational Associations had sprung up in all the major cities. The foundation of Queen's and Bedford colleges, in 1848 and 1849 respectively, offered teacher training courses that aspired to higher education. University College London first admitted women to select lectures as early as 1828; by 1878, mixed lectures were the norm. And Westfield College, the first residential women's college in London, was founded in 1882 by Constance Maynard (a Girton graduate) and other like-minded women, with the aim of providing higher education with a sense of Christian mission. Many of the institutions founded in the late nineteenth century followed this example, admitting women from their inception. By 1895, women could receive degrees at twelve universities, including Liverpool (1882), Manchester (1887) and Durham (1895). Admittedly, at Oxbridge the pattern was different. Women were certainly a presence – there were 751 'undergraduettes' at Oxford by 1925, a ratio of one to four with men – but they were, by virtue of the college system, a much less visible group. Unlike the fight for higher education in London or the provincial universities, the pioneers who created the first Oxbridge colleges for women did so in what can be seen as a socially separatist frame of mind. This separation was not necessarily by choice – Emily Davies, who founded Girton in 1869, certainly saw as her ultimate goal complete assimilation to the university. At Oxbridge, however, women had to fight for any type of inclusion, and with the reformers' attention on academic assimilation, that of social integration was necessarily relegated to the future. Even academic equality was difficult to achieve, and not always the aim. The founding of Somerville and Lady Margaret Hall simultaneously in 1879, and the rapid addition of St. Hugh's, St. Hilda's and what is now St. Anne's (originally the Society of Home-Students) at Oxford ensured that women were gaining a foothold at both universities; but in

both universities, despite their rising academic successes, women were not accepted as official members until 1920 in Oxford and 1948 in Cambridge. It is important to keep in mind the much wider area of opportunity for women in higher education outside of Oxbridge when reading *A Room of One's Own*; the limitations that Woolf diagnosed in Cambridge were not universal.

4. From the early twentieth century, a women's university novel appeared roughly every year, perhaps culminating in 1935 when five major women-focused Oxbridge novels appeared at once (Ruth Goldring's *Educating Joanna,* Gertrude Eileen Trevelyan's *Hot-House,* Dorothy L. Sayers' *Gaudy Night,* Mavis Doriel Hay's *Death on the Cherwell,* Barbara Silver's *Our Young Barbarians*). For more examples of the women's university novel, see Judy G. Batson, *Oxford in Fiction: an Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland, 1989). Meade's university fiction includes not only *A Sweet Girl Graduate* (1886) but also *The Girls of Merton College* (1915) and *The Chesterton Girl Graduates* (1913), as well as hundreds of other novels featuring students, schoolgirls and career women. For a detailed analysis of the sexual politics of Meade's college heroines, see David Trotter's "Lesbians before Lesbianism" (1998).
5. Brittain's novel made her immediately *persona non grata* at Somerville, where some undergraduates reportedly burned the book (Berry and Bostridge, 1996, p. 184). Because of its thinly disguised real-life characters and racy sexual content, *The Dark Tide* received more than 73 reviews and effectively jump-started Brittain's literary career.
6. Q. D. Leavis tirelessly campaigned against reading university fiction as representative in a series of book reviews in which she comes down harshly on Sayers and Lehmann in particular. For a nuanced account of Leavis' relation with higher education, fiction and Virginia Woolf, see Victoria Stewart's "Q. D. Leavis: Women and Education Under Scrutiny" (2004).
7. However, despite its university preoccupations, it is not fiction and there is no evidence to suggest that Woolf was directly influenced by or had knowledge of any particular university novels, although she certainly regarded certain practitioners – particularly Lehmann, whose status on the margins of Bloomsbury made her the most respectable of the group – with a mildly envious, if patronising, air. Woolf famously mocked *Dusty Answer* by writing to Pernel Strachey that she planned to write a book called *Dusty Ears,* which, like Lehmann's, would be 'the most popular book of its time' (*L*3, p. 470). Leonard Woolf, who reviewed *Dusty Answer* for the *Nation and Athenaeum*, was critical but encouraging; he particularly praised the novel's 'realistic picture of the life of the younger generation at Cambridge', (L. Woolf, 1927, p. 749), highlighting both the ways in which university fiction was implicitly trusted as a documentary source (an interesting comparison to Q. D. Leavis' dismissal of Lehmann's Girton as 'never [having] within living memory borne any relation to Miss Lehmann's account of it' (Leavis, 1936, p. 183) and reflecting the Woolfs' sense of the generational, as well as urban, divide between Bloomsbury and Cambridge.
8. 'Cuthbert Bede', the pseudonym of Edward Bradley, was a graduate of the University of Durham, which like Oxford was collegiate but which shared few other traditions. Nevertheless *Verdant Green* is still considered one of the earliest and most definitive of Oxford novels. For a discussion of Bradley's life and the novel's publication history, see Katherine M. Hutton's "The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green, or an Idea in Need of a Publisher" (1994).

9. A fondness for fact-checking and a delight in identifying the 'real' details of university life are stock features of reviews of the novels of the period, which necessarily led to the privileging of those with first-hand experience of Oxbridge, leading to several near-miss libel suits. Indeed, this attitude remains surprisingly prevalent even among contemporary critics of university fiction, who often centre their critiques on notions of accuracy. L. T. Meade in particular was subject to criticism as an author who never attended university; while many critics assume that her lack of first-hand experience means that her books portray university life through a conservative bias, within my research I have found her descriptions to be generally well-founded, when read within the context of the late nineteenth-century university that they described. I think it is important to recognise the diversity of authors, as well as audiences, for university fiction; nevertheless, preferential treatment of 'insiders' would have been an important context for Woolf's own writing, as can be seen by her consistent flagging of the word 'outside(r)' when discussing higher education.
10. For example, from *Dusty Answer:* 'And the buildings – the fall of sunlight and shadow on grey stone, red stone . . . the buildings lifted their bulk, unfolded their pattern, glowed upon the mind by day and by night . . . ' (R. Lehmann, 1984, p. 122).
11. Several critics have commented on the relationship between Woolf and Oscar Browning. See, for example, Mark McBeth, *The Development of Teacher Training at Cambridge* (2004). Oscar Browning also features, perhaps unsurprisingly, in university fiction of the period; one of his most notable appearances comes in Shane Leslie's 1926 novel *The Cantab*, which was later banned for obscenity. Here Browning becomes the somewhat ludicrous 'O.B.', an over-the-top history don who idealises the Middle Ages as 'the meeting of the real and ideal' (Leslie, 1926, p. 127), part of a cast of grossly exaggerated characters inhabiting 'the college that forgot God' (Leslie, 1926, p. 95) as Leslie refers to King's. The frequent use of real-world characters in university fiction epitomises the blurring of fact/fiction boundaries that characterises the genre.

5
London Rooms

Morag Shiach

Virginia Woolf liked to walk around London. We have become very familiar, as critics and as readers of Woolf, with the ways in which she documents, celebrates, fictionalises and transforms the activity of walking through urban spaces. Her novels, her short stories, her essays and her diaries all contain traces of walks and they also stage arguments about the importance and the fascinations of the kind of walking we have come to know as 'street haunting'. Woolf's relation to the city as a public space, and specifically as a modern public space, has informed a series of attempts to theorise the particular meanings of modernity, and indeed of modernism, for women.

The figure of the *flâneur* has been central to this engagement with Woolf and the city. The *flâneur* emerges as a character in Walter Benjamin's readings of selected poems by Charles Baudelaire, and particularly in his reading of Baudelaire's "Painter of Modern Life" (1863), where the *flâneur* is a key character in the reconfigured landscape of modernity. For Benjamin the *flâneur* embodies a new mode of modern subjectivity that is a constant dialectic between the heroic assertion of individual autonomy and the seductive, but threatening, immersion in the crowd. Benjamin's *flâneur* apparently offers us a way of grasping the constituent ambiguities of modern selfhood: capturing the fascination and the anonymity of the crowd along with the confirmatory certainty of personal separation and of difference. Strolling through the urban space, encountering its multiplicity, its threats, its desires and its commodities, has seemed to many the most powerful possible metaphor of modernity.

The search for a female *flâneur* (a *flâneus*e), has generated a series of reflections on the extent to which this modern dialectic of the self in the city is also available to women, and Woolf's writing has been a key

point of reference for these inquiries. A character such as Elizabeth in *Mrs. Dalloway* is read as embodying the potential of the modern city to move characters away from the social and gender structures that constrain them, and toward an identity that is mobile, inventive, and even transgressive: all this simply by riding on a bus! And Woolf's own perambulations through London, caught in a text such as "Street Haunting", have offered a glimpse into the complex modes of identification and of fantasy set in play by the modern city, with its ghostly tenacious traces recorded through metaphors of space and through languages of desire. We should of course also remember that the very visibility of bodies in public spaces in such public walking has also generated textual images of vulnerability and of guilt, that in turn haunt the easy strolling of a putative *flâneuse*.

We have, then, a theoretical and a critical landscape in which it is possible to read walking through the city as part of a narrative of modernity, and specifically to read Woolf's texts as making a distinctive contribution to understanding the complexities of the ways in which women can inhabit, and find space in, this modern world. The question I will be addressing in this chapter, however, is what happens when we bring the modern subject in from the city streets to the domestic interior. Can we produce a comparably historicised form of cultural analysis or literary criticism that engages with the more confined, and the more static terrain of the room as a way of reading the modern city? The question strikes me as important, and as particularly relevant to an engagement with Woolf's work, partly because of Woolf's own foregrounding of the room's significance through her choice of titles such as *Jacob's Room* or *A Room of One's Own*. Given the context in which the ideas in this chapter emerged – the "Back to Bloomsbury" conference at the University of London in June 2004 which focused on Woolf's relation to Bloomsbury – I concentrate in this chapter in particular on London rooms (some in Bloomsbury) in a range of Woolf's texts. I examine in particular how rooms function for Woolf as spaces of memory, as frameworks for identity, as sites of integrity and security and also perhaps of a more threatening type of enclosure. I will also try to establish whether we can read a political, an aesthetic or a historical project into Woolf's representation of London rooms.

I am conscious, and gratified, that I am not alone in seeking to understand how our historical and theoretical models might change were we to re-imagine the city as a structured network of rooms, rather than as a series of interconnecting streets. Indeed a number of papers presented at the "Back to Bloomsbury" conference suggested that this was a question

of some broader interest. For example, Sowon Park presented a paper that argued for the significance of Jane Harrison's interest in a home of one's own, in a deliberate parallel with Woolf's insistence on the importance of a room of one's own, while Christopher Reed presented more of his research into the visual landscape of Bloomsbury rooms in the 1920s. Victoria Rosner also presented a paper at the conference, and her contribution to thinking on the topic of modernist rooms can be found in her *Modernism and the Architecture of Private Life* (2005). In this chapter I hope to draw together some of the questions raised by these diverse research projects that take rooms as their object, in order to develop an argument about the particular, and even the peculiar, significance of London rooms in the imaginative landscape of Woolf's writings.

I will begin this argument about London rooms by briefly discussing the importance of space as a social category, with reference to the work of the cultural geographer Doreen Massey. I will then consider the demand for a 'room of one's own' in the work of a number of early twentieth-century writers, and will argue that this demand engages with a range of social and sexual constraints and opportunities. Thirdly, I will consider how the modern home was changing in the early twentieth century, with particular reference to the impact of electricity. I will be particularly interested here in Woolf's response to technological innovations as they reconfigured domestic rooms. Throughout the chapter, I will examine rooms in a number of Woolf's texts, considering how they figure as a space of memory, as a framework for identities, and as a locus of security. I will concentrate in particular on rooms in Kensington, in Bloomsbury, and by way of structuring absence, in Cambridge.

Cultural geography has in recent years drawn our attention to the ways in which power, space and representation are mutually implicated. It is perhaps an indication of the impact of such work that this chapter draws on a series of geographical metaphors such as 'landscape', 'terrain' and indeed 'space'. Doreen Massey's work on the geography of gendered inequalities seems particularly pertinent here, since Woolf's exploration of domestic interiors cannot be understood without reference to an understanding of the ways is which gender is both produced and reinforced by the spatial arrangements of rooms. Massey reminds us that 'the intersections and mutual influences of "geography" and "gender" are deep and multifarious' (Massey, 1994, p. 177). By this she means that the experience of living as a woman or as a man in any particular culture is learned in relation to an organisation of space that is also an articulation of power. But Massey's stress on 'intersections' and

'mutual influences' makes it clear that this is not a simple story of space producing forms of inequality. Rather, one is dealing with contested terrains, with spaces that need to be continually remade, and always risk being undone. Gender finds expression in spatial structures, but spaces also impact on the ways in which gender categories are made and unmade.

One might immediately think here of the vivid ways in which Woolf conjures up the internal spaces of her childhood home, 22 Hyde Park Gate. This large but cramped house in Kensington was the place in which Virginia Woolf (then Virginia Stephen) learned what was expected of her, first as a girl and then as a woman. As we shall see, she eventually left this house with real anticipation and excitement as she headed towards the very different domestic spaces of Bloomsbury. But the rooms at Hyde Park Gate were never forgotten, and the cramped and semantically charged rooms of this house re-emerge across a series of her texts. Woolf's biographers agree on the emotional and psychological importance of 22 Hyde Park Gate. Hermione Lee stresses the house's separation from urban life, situated as it was at the end of a cul-de-sac, and also its cramped darkness, generated by dark paintwork, by heavy furniture and by the absence of electric lighting (Lee, 1996, pp. 35–46). Anna Snaith confirms this picture of Hyde Park Gate, and stresses its sense of entrapment and enclosure. She also explores the internal hierarchies of space in this house in ways that suggest the complexity of the ways in which different rooms could enable or constrain different versions of the self, suggesting that for Virginia Woolf this house was divided between a downstairs that was a place of convention and an upstairs that was a place of study, and this implicitly of more authentic selfhood (Snaith, 2000).

When Virginia Woolf writes about these rooms in her early journals, there is a striking absence of detail about her domestic environment. The entries from the 1890s concentrate overwhelmingly on moments when she was able to leave this house, dwelling on trips, excursions and visits, and leaving time spent within 22 Hyde Park Gate as a rather painful structuring absence. These are suggestive moments, for example, when her maid forces open her window: 'Marie, coming in to call me at a quarter to 8 this morning, gasped for breath and rushed to the window, flung it open & then apologised for her behaviour. But really your room was so hot, that I could scarcely breathe' (*PA*, p. 105). The sense of enclosure is palpable in these journals, but the meaning of this is not straightforward. On returning to Hyde Park Gate after an eight-week holiday, she writes: 'We are back – here I sit in my own room,

where I have sat and slept since babyhood almost. It has a new red carpet – otherwise it remains the same, & I would not have it changed' (*PA*, p. 209). And she notes shortly after that 'A London house feels undeniably small and stuffed after the country – but we shall shake down' (*PA*, p. 210). Since she lived there from birth with up to 17 other people, the stuffed feeling can be understood at a number of levels, as indeed can the smallness, but the determination to survive is striking.

The cost of such strategies of survival can perhaps be glimpsed in Woolf's short story of 1906, "Phyllis and Rosamond", which focuses on two unmarried young women living in their family home in Kensington. The story is written after Woolf's move to Bloomsbury, and the contrast between the 'freedom' of Bloomsbury and the conventional constraints of Kensington is integral to the narrative. For Phyllis and Rosamond, the drawing room in their home 'represents work . . . and not play' (*CSF*, p. 18). There they are required to entertain a series of visitors and to play their parts in a variety of social ploys designed to secure their successful marriage. This 'slow round of social obligations' is interrupted by a party in Bloomsbury, where the sisters feel excited, alienated and bewildered to discover a completely different ordering of domestic space. For Phyllis, life at Kensington is a 'life trained to grow in an ugly pattern' (*CSF*, p. 24), but the alternative life of autonomy and intellectual exchange they glimpse at the Bloomsbury party is palpably impossible for them to realise. Phyllis patiently explains that they could never ask friends around to their home in Kensington, because 'We haven't a room, for one thing: and then we should never be allowed to do it. We are daughters, until we become married women' (*CSF*, p. 27). Here gender and geography intersect with a vengeance, with the only possible modes of femininity being articulated through the constraint and deprivation inherent in not having (a) room.

Woolf returns to explore her memories of 22 Hyde Park Gate at a number of moments in her writing life. Interestingly, the interior becomes gradually more fully realised as the time that separated her from these rooms becomes greater. While her early journal could barely manage to sketch these spaces, her later writings, published in *Moments of Being,* increasingly detail the rooms and their significance for her. In "22 Hyde Park Gate", a talk delivered to the Memoir Club in the early twenties, Woolf examines her memories of that house between 1900 and 1903. Here there is still a striking tendency to shy away from descriptions of space in favour of the evocation of character. Nonetheless there is a very powerful description of the ways in which the organisation

of spaces could create a sense of secrecy, of guilt, or of fear, which is focused on boundaries and barriers between rooms:

> it is of the folding doors that I wish to speak. How could family life have been carried on without them? As soon dispense with water-closets or with bathrooms as with folding doors in a family of nine men and women [. . .] Suddenly there would be a crisis – a servant dismissed, a lover rejected, pass books opened, or poor Mrs Tyndall who had lately poisoned her husband by mistake come for consolation. [. . .] Though dark and agitated on one side, the other side of the door, particularly on Sunday afternoons, was cheerful enough. (*MB*, p. 164)

In her essay on "Old Bloomsbury", also written in the early twenties, Woolf is more concerned with the significance of her move to Bloomsbury, to which I shall return later. But she also writes powerfully, and polemically, about the rooms she is leaving behind:

> It was a house of innumerable oddly shaped rooms built to accommodate not one family but three. [. . .] To house the lot of us, now a storey would be thrown out on top, now a dining room flung out at bottom. [. . .] Here then seventeen or eighteen people lived in small bedrooms with one bathroom and three water-closets between them. (*MB*, p. 182)

She stresses the sense of isolation and separation generated by these cramped and crowded rooms, so far from the noise of traffic or from the accident of passers-by. But Woolf also remembers the rooms in this house as 'tangled and matted with emotion' (*MB*, p. 183), noting that 'the walls and the rooms had in sober truth been built to our shape. We had permeated the whole vast fabric [. . .] with our family history' (*MB*, p. 183). So here another layer is added to the psychological meanings of the rooms in Hyde Park Gate. They are small and uncomfortable, and they generate unwelcome intimacies. Family life depends on boundaries that are always in fact permeable: those folding doors were clearly far from soundproof. There is a stifling sense of isolation, of being cut off from the energy of the modern city and encased in a constraining Victorian shell. But there is also a saturation of emotion through which space becomes history, so that Woolf insists she could 'write a history of every mark and scratch in my room' (*MB*, p. 183).

"A Sketch of the Past", written nearly twenty years later than "22 Hyde Park Gate", returns to these spaces and to the emotional and psychological significance of the house's different rooms. Woolf's spatial imagination is here more expansive, as she writes of 'that great Cathedral space that was childhood' (*MB*, p. 81). The suggestion is of grandeur of scale and beauty of architecture. But the detail of the house consistently confounds this effort towards architectural generosity. Woolf notes that 'two different ages confronted each other in the drawing room at Hyde Park Gate: the Victorian Age; and the Edwardian Age [. . .] The cruel thing was that while we could see the future, we were completely in the power of the past' (*MB*, p. 147). She writes of a house in which she was at times able to 'escape the pressures of Victorian society' by reading, borrowing books from her father's very extensive library. But 'the change would come in the afternoon. About 4.30 Victorian society exerted its pressure. Then we must be "in". For at 5 father must be given his tea, And we must be better dressed and tidier [. . .] we would have to sit at that table, she [Vanessa] or I, decently dressed, having nothing better to do, ready to talk' (*MB*, p. 148).

This sense of living in two different times, and of being two different people, is mapped by Woolf onto the geography of the house, She writes of 22 Hyde Park Gate that 'The division in our life was curious. Downstairs there was pure convention: upstairs pure intellect. But there was no connection between them' (*MB*, p. 157). But that memory, of course is false, because Virginia herself had to forge such connections continually, moving between these spaces and sustaining both her social and her intellectual life.

The shaping power of the 'purely conventional' continued to fascinate Woolf, who so often writes about characters who are caught in repetitive rituals, structures and spaces that define the terms of their being. Such a character can be found in the final essay of a series published by Woolf in *Good Housekeeping* in 1932. The final essay was entitled "Portrait of a Londoner", and focused on one female character, who conducts the social part of her life entirely through serving tea in her drawing room ("Portrait", 1932). Mrs Crowe is encountered, in her black dress and veil, entertaining a series of visitors. She rarely leaves her house, and for her 'London' is a reality entirely mediated by the gossip that is brought in to her by others. She does not seek intimacy or intensity, but rather the structured regularity of a predictable sociability: 'she had made her nest so compact and so complete that the outer world had not a feather or a twig to add to it'. The metaphor is

developed further, and Mrs Crowe's 'birdlike' demeanour is here surely reminiscent of Clarissa Dalloway:

> As she sat in her chair with her guests ranged round she would give from time to time a quick bird-like glance over her shoulder, as if she had half an eye on the street, as if she had half an ear upon the cars and the omnibuses and the cries of the paper boys under the window. ("Portrait", p. 132)

But this bird, it must be remembered, is a crow, and the nest image brings little consolation. The crow's predatory associations are significant, and her veil surely renders her something of a hooded crow with all the associations with scavenging and destructive violence. This crow's nest certainly offers little security, and in the final paragraph of the essay we learn, without ceremony but with some distress, that 'Mrs Crowe is dead' ("Portrait", p. 132).

The other five essays in the series were later published collectively as *The London Scene*. These essays have been discussed frequently, often as part of the texts that define Woolf as *flâneur*, and place her within debates about women and the space of the urban. They cover topics from 'The Docks of London' to Oxford Street, the House of Commons and the houses of famous men. Woolf captures the energy and the fascination of the circulation of commodities in the modern metropolis, describing Oxford Street as 'a breeding ground, a forcing house of sensation' (*LS*, p. 17). And she celebrates the ephemeral quality of this space, explicitly enjoying the sense, for example, that 'these Oxford Street palaces are rather flimsy abodes – perhaps grounds rather than dwelling places'. She argues that 'the charm of modern London is that it is not built to last; it is built to pass' and suggests that 'this gaudy, bustling vulgar street reminds us that all life is a struggle; that all building is perishable' (*LS*, pp. 19–22).

When Woolf turns her attention to interiors in these essays, however, the struggle of life is imagined very differently. Rather than an encounter with the ephemeral and the temporal, the struggle becomes rather one of the recalcitrant and the spatial. Typically, in her essay "Great Men's Houses", Woolf advances her argument through a comparison of rooms in different parts of London, in this case not Kensington and Bloomsbury, but rather the Chelsea of the Carlyles and the Hampstead of Keats. Hampstead is represented as serene and gay. The rooms of Keats's house are marked by his presence: 'the rooms are small but

shapely [. . .] the rooms are so empty and furnished rather with light and shadow than with chairs and tables' (*LS*, p. 27). Woolf describes this house as calm and quiet, but also as connected to the vital energies of the urban: 'Life goes on outside the window [. . .] one hears the far-off rattle of wheels, the bark of dogs fetching and carrying sticks from the pond' (*LS*, p. 28). This Hampstead room is light and calm, away from the 'traffic of life' and yet somehow still opening out onto the rattle of wheels and the barking of dogs.

The Carlyles' house in Chelsea, on the other hand, strikes Woolf as dark, cramped and oppressive. Woolf is overwhelmed by the house as a kind of battleground, in this instance between order and dirt. She notes that 'the drawing-room paper with its small dark pattern needed cleaning; the yellow varnish on the panels was cracked and peeling' and also observes that 'the high panelled rooms seem to echo with the sound of pumping and the swish of scrubbing', and finally concludes that 'number 5 Cheyne Row is not so much a dwelling place as a battlefield – the scene of labour, effort and perpetual struggle' (*LS*, pp. 24–5). Woolf stresses the lack of domestic technology in the Carlyles' house, a matter of particular interest, perhaps, to the readers of *Good Housekeeping*, where the essay was originally published. She mentions the absence of mains water, of electric lighting and of gas heating that made the rooms of this house so dark and uncomfortable. And these rooms provide no sort of refuge in Woolf's account. As in Keats's house, the urban world does still penetrate, but instead of the reassurance offered by dogs chasing sticks on the Heath, here the sounds that penetrate are unpleasant and obscurely threatening. While Carlyle retreats to the attic to write, 'the rattle of a barrel organ and the raucous shouts of street hawkers came through walls whose double thickness distorted, but by no means excluded the sound' (*LS*, p. 24).

Clearly there is much in common between the ways in which Woolf writes about the rooms in 22 Hyde Park Gate and in 5 Cheyne Row. Both houses seem to embody Victorianism, a cultural moment expressed of course through their associations with two central Victorian men of letters, Leslie Stephen and Thomas Carlyle. They are cramped and dark, and living in these rooms is a battle made much more unpleasant by material discomfort. The same kind of ambiguous enclosure is found in the house in which the Pargiters live in the 1880s section of *The Years*. Thus, for example, we find Crosby serving tea and closing the curtains in the drawing-room:

> soon the windows were obscured by thick sculptured folds of claret-coloured plush. [. . .] The world outside seemed thickly and entirely

> cut away. Far away down the next street they heard the voice of a street hawker droning; the heavy hooves of van horses clopped slowly down the road. For a moment wheels ground on the road; then they died out and the silence was complete. (*TY*, p. 20)

We have already learned enough about the frustrations and repressions within that house for such enclosure to feel far from comfortable.

The gloom and the material discomfort to which Woolf refers in her descriptions of houses in Kensington and in Chelsea is not, of course, simply a matter of metaphorical association. These houses had few of what we might call modern conveniences. Woolf writes of 5 Cheyne Row as: 'the high house without water, without electric light, without gas fires, full of books and coal smoke' (*LS*, p. 24). Electric lighting was still uncommon and expensive in Britain in the early years of the twentieth century. As one historian notes, 'it was not until about 1911, when metal filament lamps had been perfected, that electric lighting became competitive for the first time', and she also points out that even after the end of the Great War, only six per cent of houses in Britain were wired for electricity (Davidson, 1986, p. 38). Not until the mid-20s did the *Electricity (Supply) Act* lead to the establishment of a national standard for the generation of electricity, a process that had taken place significantly earlier in the US. In 1923, we can still find an enthusiastic proponent of the potential benefits of electricity writing about the transformations in domestic life generated by the introduction of the electric bell, and speculating that 'when electric heating can be obtained at a marketable price [. . .] it will be a common practice to have the temperature of our houses and offices automatically controlled' (Gibson, 1923, p. 120).

Virginia Woolf was always sensitive to the psychological consequences of space, and an enthusiastic proponent of new domestic technologies. Leonard Woolf wrote that 'in my experience what cuts the deepest channels in our lives are the different houses in which we live', and it is clear that both Leonard and Virginia gave significant attention to the material circumstances of their daily lives (L. Woolf, 1964, p. 62). They had a new hot water range, a new bath and new water-closets installed at Rodmell in the mid-1920s, and a 'new bath water engine' installed in Tavistock Square in 1934 (*D*3, p. 9; *D*4, pp. 201–3). The significance of new domestic technologies is also fascinatingly articulated in the narrative and the metaphorical structure of *The Years*. Indeed, the novel charts the routines and technologies of domestic life as they develop across the 'years' it so carefully maps. By 1917, Maggie is married and a mother,

living a bohemian life; '"We dine in the basement", she continued, turning to Eleanor, "because we've no servants"' (*TY*, p. 282). As we move towards the novel's end, there is a more explicit engagement with new domestic technologies. In the final section, Peggy foresees tyranny, torture, and the fall of civilisation. Against this apocalyptic vision we are presented with the apparently trivial remark that, 'Scraps reached her from above. ". . . flats in Highgate have bathrooms", they were saying' (*TY*, p. 389). The recurring vision of disaster is here interwoven with comments on the state of contemporary plumbing.

In the "Present Day" section of *The Years* Sara is living in a lodging house in a street which North, her cousin's son, describes as 'dirty', 'sordid' and 'low-down' (*TY*, p. 311). After a very unsatisfactory dinner, North and Sara are disturbed by the sounds of Sara's neighbour in the bath. Her disgust at this intimate proximity, moves towards an Eliotic invocation of the degradation and the corruption of the modern city, '"Polluted city, unbelieving city, city of dead fish and won-out frying pans – thinking of a river's bank when the tide's out", she explained' (*TY*, p. 340). North listens to her increasingly excited rendition of her disgust, and 'the actual words floated together and formed a sentence in his mind – meant that she was poor; that she must earn her living' (*TY*, p. 340).

Having to earn a living thus generates a different set of relationships to domestic space, and places characters in very different sorts of rooms. The connection between the reconfiguration of gender relations (at work as well as at home) and the desire for 'a room of one's own' can be found in a number of rather different texts from the early years of the twentieth century. In a recent study of utopian thinking in the 1920s, the historian Sally Alexander draws attention to a fictional autobiography by Kathleen Woodward, entitled *Jipping Street* (1928). This text describes Woodward's working-class childhood in Bermondsey, and Alexander argues that Woodward's desire for a room of her own, so forcefully articulated in the text, was 'a plea for escape from the claustrophobia, abjection and narrow-mindedness of poverty' (Alexander, 2000, p. 275). Christopher Reed observes that the desire for a room of one's own was a fairly widespread one among Woolf's creative peers, and argues that a room could provide a pretext and an opportunity for remaking both the self and aspects of the social. Thus he notes Lytton Strachey writing to Duncan Grant in 1909 in the following terms: 'Good God! to have a room of one's own with a real fire and books and tea and company, and no dinner bells and distractions and a little time for doing something! It's a wonderful vision' (Reed, 1996, p. 147). Reed

suggests that this desire for a room expresses a need to escape inherited modes of domesticity, and to find the space and the resources to create modernist rooms that will contain new familial and social groupings. Similarly, Reed notes that Vanessa shared her sister's desire for a room, as she asserts that

> all that seemed to matter was that at last we were free, had rooms of our own and space in which to be alone or to work or to see our friends. Such things may come naturally to many of the present generation but to me at least in 1904 it was as if one had stepped suddenly into daylight from darkness. (Spalding, 1983, p. 49)

This move from darkness into daylight is also one of the ways in which Woolf represented her own move from Kensington to Bloomsbury, a move which among other things gave her a much more congenial room of her own. Anna Snaith has written interestingly about Bloomsbury as 'an area in which single, independent women could find accommodation in flats, rooms or bedsits', and has also pointed out the association of Bloomsbury with single, financially independent women that is developed across a series of fictional texts of the period (Snaith, 2000, p. 26). The room for which Woolf longed in particular was one 'with books and nothing else, where I can shut myself up' (*L*1, p. 147). As Sowon Park has argued, the study is a room with particular significance for intellectual women in this period. Jane Harrison's discussion of the factors inhibiting women's entry into specific branches of scholarship includes merciless mocking of the ways in which men might use the study as 'a place inviolate, guarded by immemorial taboos' where 'he wants to be by himself', but Harrison is not immune to the attractions of such seclusion. Admitting that she may violate codes of femininity ('I have known for a long time that I am no "true woman"') she nonetheless suggests that one of the most significant 'signs of the times is that woman is beginning to demand a study' (Harrison, 1915, p. 128).

In Winifred Holtby's 1932 biography of Woolf, particular attention is drawn to Woolf's study in 52 Tavistock Square:

> Mrs Woolf herself uses as a study an immense half-subterranean room behind the house, piled with books, parcels, packets of unbound volumes, and manuscripts for the press [. . .] . The light penetrates wanly down between the high buildings overhead, as through deep waters, and noises from the outside world enter only in a subdued murmur, as from very far away. (Holtby, 1932, p. 35)

The underwater quality of this space is strikingly described by Holtby: it is 'subterranean', the light seems to have travelled through water, and the subdued murmur has more of the sea than the street about it. In creating this working space, Woolf is disrupting the ordering of space and the hierarchy of rooms that had dominated her early life. She introduces fluidity into the apparently static and bounded space of a room.

Fluidity is frequently evoked in Woolf's representations of Bloomsbury rooms. For example, she describes 46 Gordon Square, to which she moved in 1904 following the death of her father, as follows:

> it was astonishing to stand at the drawing room window and look into all those trees; the tree which shoots its branches up into the air and lets them fall in a *shower*; the tree which *glistens after rain* like the body of a seal [. . .] we decorated our walls with *washes* of plain distemper. We were full of experiments and reforms. (*MB*, p. 184, emphasis added)

These reforms created new kinds of space, and new ways of looking, 'things one had never seen in the darkness [. . .] shone out for the first time in the drawing-room at Gordon Square' (*MB*, p. 184). Christopher Reed has written about the ways in which the decoration and the furnishing of these Bloomsbury rooms expressed a distinctive modernist sensibility, suggesting that Bloomsbury in this period saw 'knowledge of the French avant-garde in the service of the new domesticity' (Reed, 1996, p. 150). And certainly Woolf's commitment to re-making her domestic space was to continue throughout her life. Hermione Lee remarks that on moving to Tavistock Square in 1924, Woolf 'determined to make the rooms beautiful, to spend money on furniture and decorations' (Lee, 1996, p. 473). Like the sisters in her story "Phyllis and Rosamond" Woolf finds that in Bloomsbury 'there was room, and freedom' (*CSF*, p. 24).

But we should resist the conclusion that potentially hovers here of a Bloomsbury idyll of space, creativity and freedom. Mindful of Doreen Massey's observation that 'the spatial is integral to the production of history, and thus to the possibility of politics' (Massey, 1994, p. 269), we might need a more careful examination of what this version of Bloomsbury excludes and of the forms of politics that these rooms cannot contain. A lot of London, is the very obvious answer. These Bloomsbury rooms are, not, after all, the space of significant power, as Woolf's critique of legal, educational and political institutions in *Three Guineas*, for example, makes very clear. But they are a space of very

significant cultural and social advantage. 'Bloomsbury' would need to be pulled away from the very real power of Woolf's mythifying imagination if these relations of power were finally to be grasped.

Woolf did not, of course, live all her life in Bloomsbury, and the other rooms in which she lived over many years, at Richmond, or in Sussex, would have to feature in any fuller history of the significance of rooms in her life as a whole. So too would the Oxbridge 'room' that recurs in so many of her texts as the space of self-fashioning and of intellectual adventure. But London rooms have been my focus, and it is with a London room I will finish. Jacob's room, far from being the fullest expression of his selfhood, is the most certain architectural expression of his cruel demise. The precariousness of rooms as a framework of the self is powerfully invoked in this image from the final page of *Jacob's Room*, which I will cite without further comment, but as a means to suggest the complex issues involved in trying to articulate a version of human history through the always potentially empty space of the room:

> Listless is the air in an empty room, just swelling the curtain; the flowers in the jar shift. One fibre in the wicker armchair creaks, though no one sits there.
>
> Bonamy crossed to the window. Pickford's van swung down the street. The omnibuses were locked together at Mudie's corner. Engines throbbed, and carters, jamming the breaks down, pulled their horses sharp up. A harsh and unhappy voice cried something unintelligible. And then suddenly all the leaves seemed to raise themselves.
>
> 'Jacob! Jacob! cried Bonamy, standing by the window. The leaves sank down again. (*JR*, p. 176)

Note

I am grateful for the generous responses of the participants at "Back to Bloomsbury": the International Virginia Woolf Conference (2004) to this paper. Their comments and suggestions have been very helpful. Some of the argument of this chapter was presented to a conference at the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior in 2004, and I am also very grateful to those who responded on that occasion. In an extended and revised form some of this work on modernism and domestic interiors was then published in the journal *Home Cultures* in 2005.

6

Leonard and Virginia's London Library: Mapping London's Tides, Streams and Statues

Elisa Kay Sparks

Washington State University's (WSU) collection of the working library of Leonard and Virginia Woolf includes among its more than 6000 volumes more than a dozen books about London and its environs (Gillespie, 2003, p. xvi). Although many of these books seem to have belonged to Virginia rather than to Leonard, it is often not possible to tell which of the two owned, read or used a particular volume. However, an account of the books about London in the Woolfs' library does add some evidence for speculation about key images and allusions having to do with the layers of literary history sedimented by the hidden rivers and flowing streams of London's streets, especially as they underlie Virginia Woolf's vision of London in *Mrs. Dalloway*, *A Room of One's Own* and *The London Scene*.

Virginia and Leonard's London books can be chronologically arranged into four general categories. First, there are the early works belonging to Virginia Stephen; often received as gifts, these are historical guidebooks including collections of poems and quotations about the city. Next, there is a cluster of books, only occasionally identifiable as belonging to either Virginia or Leonard, garnered in the 1910s and early 1920s, more systematically historical in focus. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, creative works representing artists' portrayals of the city begin to appear, including books published by the Hogarth Press. And finally, there are the practical works used in the later 1930s: guidebooks and maps for getting around, as well as treatises on London politics probably owned by Leonard.

Belonging to Virginia's Stephen's adolescence, the first batch of London books establishes the cultural foundation of Woolf's love for the city, especially for its rich, hidden history, and concentration of literary associations. On Virginia Stephen's fourteenth birthday, 25 January 1896, her older half-brother George Duckworth presented her with a copy of the

sixth edition of Augustus J. C. Hare's classic *Walks in London*. Virginia's mother, Julia Stephen, had been dead for almost nine months. Virginia had her first serious mental breakdown soon after her mother's death, and the family doctor's prescription for her recovery included four hours a day outdoors, spent, according to Quentin Bell, on long walks or rides on the tops of buses (Bell 2, 1972, p. 45). Perhaps this birthday gift from George was an element of that prescription, an invitation to begin what would be a lifetime of exploring London's maze-like streets.

Hare's guide is a veritable commonplace book of literary quotations about London, many of them from authors who would become Virginia's favorites; William Cowper, Charles Lamb and Thomas Babington Macaulay are all invoked in the first two pages – mostly in praise of the pleasures of walking in the city. Hare introduces E. Bulwer Lytton's words in *Ernest Maltravers* – 'The spirit of London is in her thoroughfares – her population!' – and goes on to quote his description of driving through London at night, the image in which will seem familiar to anyone who knows Woolf's essay on "Modern Fiction": 'as the lamps blaze upon you at night and street after street glides by your wheels, each so regular in its symmetry, so equal in its civilization – how all speak of the *City of Freeman*' (Hare, 1894, p. 1). Similar attitudes are revealed in another excerpt from Charles Lamb, extolling the superior pleases of the city over the country:

> The passion for crowds is nowhere feasted so full as in London. The man must have a rare *recipe* for melancholy who can be dull in Fleet Street. I am naturally inclined to hypochondria, but in London it vanishes, like all other ills. Often, when I have felt a weariness or distaste at home, have I rushed out into the crowded Strand and fed my humor, till tears have wetted my cheeks for innumerable sympathies with the multitudinous moving picture, which she never fails to present at all hours, like the scenes of a shifting pantomime. (Hare, 1894, p. 1)

Samuel Johnson is another frequently quoted metropolitan; his paean about London – 'I think the full tide of existence is at Charing Cross' – used by Hare to introduce Chapter One on The Strand, is copied out in the book's dedication – apparently in Virginia's own hand.

After beginning with all these literary invocations, Hare goes on to explore the etymology of 'Charing' in an effort to establish the medieval origin of the site, continues with the history of the various crosses in London and the statue of Charles I erected in 1674, and quotes Edmund Waller's poem about the statue. Hare ends with a flurry of literary references to Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*, the early schooling of Ben Jonson

and an allusion to the location in one of Jonathan Swift's poems. This combined emphasis on history, art, architecture and literary allusions extends throughout the volume, which takes every opportunity to track the haunts of literary and artistic figures; a section on Bow Street, for example, quotes John Dryden and Sir Walter Scott and makes note of a varied cast of inhabitants including Edmund Waller, the poet, Grinling Gibbons, the sculptor, Henry Fielding, the novelist, and William Wycherley, the playwright (Hare, 1894, p. 26). Small drawings of important statues and examples of London architecture (Charles I at Charing Cross, the statue of the Moor at Clement's End, Bunyan's Tomb, Wych Street) are scattered throughout. In addition, Hare's work, like many other London books in the collection, makes mention of what has become one theme of my investigations: in his introduction he describes how 'all the smaller brooks or rivers which fed the Thames are buried and lost to view' (Hare, 1894, p. xxiv).

Possibly just as important in establishing the conventional literary associations of various sites in London was Wilfred Whitten's *London in Song*, first published in 1898. That book was apparently given to Virginia in 1900, when she was eighteen, by her 'Aunt Stephen', as the book is inscribed.[1] This compilation of more than two hundred poems and excerpts is similar to Hare's book in that it is organised geographically, grouping poems about Kensington Gardens, Vauxhall, Charing Cross and Piccadilly and St James Park. It also creates thematic clusters, gathering together poems about London in May, the River Thames and London poets and coffee houses, for example. In addition, the collection stresses contrasts, juxtaposing poems about country and city, West London and the East End, spring and winter, London at night and during the day; the latter theme is emphasised by its contrasting endpapers, with the sun rising in the east under the towers of London Bridge and the moon sailing in the skies over the river by Westminster.

Inevitably, Whitten's collection includes many of the same excerpts and authors as Hare. For instance, Whitten begins as Hare does by quoting Cowper's praise of London from "The Sofa" section of his long poem *The Task*; Hare includes the stanzas that praise the many forms of pleasure to be found in the city, while Whitten singles out those which commend London as a centre of philosophy and commerce.[2] Both books contain Waller's poem on the statue of Charles I and many excerpts from Pope, Dryden, William Shakespeare, Thomas Hood, Robert Herrick, Ben Jonson and others. Although Whitten's volume contains more up-to-date poems from Romantics such as John Keats, William Blake, William Wordsworth and Lord Byron, both compilations

also begin by highlighting Percy Shelley's infamous characterisation of London in his "Letter to Maria Gisborne" (1820) as 'that great sea whose ebb and flow/ At once is deaf and loud' (Shelley, 1855, p. 59).

These two books on London and its literary and artistic history provide the foundation for the development of Virginia's interests in the city where she was born and lived for most of her life. In 1903, she completed a series of sketches, which were self-set exercises in creating scenes; these are reprinted in *A Passionate Apprentice* (1990). Tracing the arc of a year – from the 1903 spring social season, through the retreat to country life in summer, to the return to London in the autumn – about a third of the pieces have London as their subjects. All examine oppositional *topoi* familiar to presentations of London: the past and the present, the city and the country, leisure and work, spring and winter, night and day, and another, which will become a leitmotif of all of Woolf's mature work: the insider and the outsider. "A Dance in Queen's Gate" and "A Garden Dance" deal with being outside and inside the social life of the city, as do "Thoughts upon Social Success" and "An Artistic Party". "An Expedition to Hampton Court" tells of the haunting of the old palace by ghostly ladies from the past, a moment of being let inside. "The Country in London", "Retrospect" and "London" all meditate upon the complexity of life in the city as opposed to the simplicity of country pursuits. For Virginia Stephen, London is a place where she feels intellectually connected to the past: 'I read some history: it is suddenly all alive, branching forwards & backwards & connected with every kind of thing that seemed entirely remote before' (*PA*, p. 178). But then she also experiences a kind of disjunction caused by too much stimulation: 'In London undoubtedly there are too many people – all different [. . .] & they must all be reconciled to the scheme of the universe' (*PA*, p. 179). Like Lamb, but unlike Cowper, the rural peace of the country is not enough for her. The last sketch of the series speculates on the suicide of a middle-aged woman who drowned herself in the Serpentine because she lacked the one thing that might have made life endurable – work (*PA*, pp. 212–13). Virginia Stephen ends the arc of sketches announcing the beginning of the year in the month of October, the month when she returns to London and to work: it seems a drowning in the tides of the city is a form of rebirth.

A little more than a year after polishing these early exercises, Virginia Stephen began to publish essays. Almost immediately she took up London as her subject. These first essays continue to develop early themes about the historic traces of London's street tides and songs, mapping out her intimate knowledge of the city in terms reminiscent of both Hare's and

Whitten's collections of references. In January 1905, a short review of *Next Door Neighbours*, a collection of nineteen short stories about London characters, chides the author for improbable plots, but introduces him as one 'who finds his best entertainment in public streets' (*E*1, p. 11). Two months later, in March, Virginia reveals herself to be in the same company with "London Street Music", a tender celebration of the 'old pagans' whose honest expression of emotions can put us in touch with the archaic rhythms of our humanity (*E*1, p. 29). Here the literal music of London's streets is associated with a 'wild and inhuman' spirit that distracts and annoys the legitimately employed. A few days later, her review of two 'trashy' travelogue books about Charles Dickens and William Thackeray continues the reflections on visiting houses of famous writers, begun in her essay on the Brontës' country home, Haworth (*E*1, n. 1 p. 35). Though she places Dickens and Thackeray as Londoners (both are tracked and quoted extensively in Hare), she critiques the over-scientific mania for detail which offers lists of every house occupied by Thackeray and every view seen by Dickens, instead of imaginative sympathy for the 'writer's county' whose territory exists only within his brain (*E*1, p. 35). And in 1908 she reviews two books about London by foreigners (one French, one German) for the *Times Literary Supplement* (*TLS*), and, in the process, repeats, perhaps mockingly, many of the conventional *topoi* about London familiar from her own travel guides: the emphasis on London's diversity, age and literary associations. Woolf describes the travel writers as 'bewildered and exhilarated by the innumerable types which pour through the narrow channels' of London's streets, noting that 'They quote their Lambs [. . .] recall what Dr. Johnson said about Charing Cross and imagine how many distinguished people have walked where we walk now' (*E*1, p. 201).

The next book in the Woolf library which reflects an interest in London is E. V. Lucas's *London Revisited*. Virginia Woolf reviewed this book in November 1916 for the *TLS*. Lucas's guidebook is rather light, impressionistic and unashamedly digressive, except for the systematic attempt to make a complete list of all 'the open air statues of London' (Lucas, 1920, p. v).[3] But responding to it elicited some of Woolf's most personal and direct comments about London, perhaps because she was just beginning her ten-year exile from the city in suburban Richmond.[4] We see her fascination with the infinite eccentricity and archaeological history of the city when she declares:

> Personally, we should be willing to read one volume about every street in the city and should still ask for more. From the bones of

> extinct monsters and the coins of Roman emperors in the cellars to the name of the shopman over the door, the whole story is fascinating and the material endless. (*E*2, p. 50)

Lucas' book includes an account of the then-new Museum of London at Stafford House (it now has its own premises near the Barbican), detailing the exhibits about prehistoric times when 'mastodons were [London's] principal inhabitants' and mentioning especially the mammoth bone found at Ilford (still prominently on display) and the exhibit of drawings of Londoners in skins by Forestier (Lucas, 1920, p. 143). In addition, the visually fascinating endpapers for Lucas's book clearly map for the attentive viewer the course of the remains of the Tyburn and other hidden rivers as they run down from Hampstead to Regent's Park through Hyde Park to the Serpentine.

Beyond references to early man and lost rivers, Lucas' catalogue of monuments calls forth a definitive statement of Woolf's dislike of the recent mania for imperial statues:

> Many of us . . . have never quite reconciled ourselves to the attempt which has been made of late to comb out her [London's] huddle of little streets and substitute military-looking avenues with enormous symbolical mounds of statuary placed at exactly the wrong spot. (*E*2, pp. 50–1)

The conclusion of her review extends into feminist territory, asking why a particular statue, 'one of the few . . . that is pleasing to the eye – the woman with an urn which fronts the gates of the Foundling Hospital', has been left out (*E*2, p. 50).[5] In a city overrun with statues of great men, Woolf comments on how one of the handful of statues commemorating anonymous women has been overlooked. The review of Lucas's book thus brings together a cluster of ideas about London which are to become increasingly intertwined in Woolf's subsequent work: early humans, old and hidden rivers, new statues of famous men, the anonymous and unseen work of women.

Several other books in the Woolfs' library expand upon the archaeological concerns that surface in Lucas. Gillian Beer has suggested that Lucy Swithin's obsession with prehistoric London in *Between the Act*s comes from reading H. G. Wells' *Outline of History* and G. M. Trevelyan's *History of England*, the 1926 edition of which is in the Woolf library. But two other books in the collection held at WSU, published in 1923 just as Woolf was in the process of planning and writing *Mrs. Dalloway,* offer

substantial details about the pre-history of London: Wilfred Marston Acres' *London and Westminster in History & Literature* and William Page's *London: Its Origin and Early Development*. Written especially for the 'rambler in the London streets' (Acre, 1923, p. 5), Acre's book is a compilation of anecdotes about London that recalls the guidebook mode of Hare and Lucas, moving from location to location with brief notes at points of interest and plenty of information about street names and local history. This Westminster chronicle pays particular attention to the hidden and lost rivers of London, discussing the Walbrook, which ran along the eastern wall of the city (Acre, 1923, p. 36), and the Fleet, which once flowed from Hampstead all the way down to Blackfriars (Acre, 1923, p. 87), noting that the part of the city of Westminster near the Abbey 'was originally marsh land, flooded by the Thames at high tide' (Acre, 1923, p. 100). Acre records that the tidal islands were bracketed by 'two of the streams by which the Tyburn emptied itself into the Thames' (Acre, 1923, p. 100) and also points out that Brook Street 'takes its name from the Tyburn, which crossed it' (Acre, 1923, p. 154). Delightful as it might be to speculate that Virginia read this account as a part of her historical research for the maps underlying the walks of *Mrs. Dalloway*, the book is in fact lightly marked and annotated by Leonard, who, in his customary fashion, listed page references on the back fly-leaf. The nine pages so recorded almost all have to do with particular street names, often associated with literary figures: Friday Street was so called because of Friday fish sales; Chaucer once lived on Friday Street (Acre, 1923, p. 34); Marvell, Voltaire and Turner all lodged in Maiden Lane at one time or another (Acre, 1923, p. 113). William Page's history of London, more scholarly than Acre's, focuses on the early development of London from the Roman encampment up to the charter granted by Henry I in 1400. That book has been similarly marked by Leonard, who made note of how the name Moorgate came from the morass formed by the blocking of the Waldbrook as it emptied into the Thames (Page, 1923, p. 13) and about the origin of the name 'Gutter Lane' – it had nothing to do with gutters but instead came from a surname 'Guthrum' (Page, 1923, p. 129).[6]

Although it is not possible to prove that both Virginia and Leonard read the Acre and Page histories of London, *Mrs. Dalloway* carves out caves behind the character of the city which do clearly rely on the mass of information she had been accumulating about the city since her childhood. Interpretations of *Mrs. Dalloway* have long focused on the dialectical structure of the novel – masculine and feminine, sane and insane, public and private, community and isolation, unity and fragmentation,

life and death, are amongst some of the dichotomies proposed. And many have, of course, noticed the prevalence of water imagery, the way the very term 'stream of consciousness' is dramatised in the novel's flowing segues from character to character. Johanna Garvey, in particular, has persuasively argued that 'Woolf employs water imagery to . . . undermine patriarchal institutions . . . and ultimately to create a female vision of the cityscape' (Garvey, 1991, p. 60). Garvey's insights connect interestingly with Gillian Beer's explorations of archaeological imagery in Woolf's work and with Scott Cohen's work on "Woolf, Wembley and Imperial Monuments" to suggest a kind of thematic complex in Woolf's vision of London that is dramatised not only in *Mrs. Dalloway*, but also in many references to London in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and in the essays which make up *The London Scene* (1932).[7]

In his article about Woolf and the imperial monuments of the British Exhibition at Wembley, Scott Cohen associates the statues of London with a 'rigidly monumentalized' concept of empire (Cohen, 2004, p. 7), noting that just after Peter glares at the statue of the Duke of Cambridge, the uniformed, who boys pass by the Cenotaph, themselves start to become statues: 'on their faces an expression like the letters of a legend written round the base of a statue praising duty, fidelity, love of England' (*MD*, p. 51). His account of Peter's progress through the city as 'an obstacle course' (Cohen, 2004, p. 7) recalls Woolf's many references to the 'tides' of people flowing through London's streets, establishing a vision of the statues as islands or hurdles in a sea of moving crowds, which is related to Woolf's many references to the prehistoric past of London as a swampy rhododendron forest.

A number of interpretations of *Mrs. Dalloway*, including those of both Garvey and Beer, have specifically identified the archaic female voices of the two old women in the text, especially the one who sings at the entrance to Regent's Park tube station. She forms a kind of unconscious, pre-linguistic maternal opposed to the imperial masculinities of the novel. By reading the books on London in the Woolfs' library and learning of the lost rivers in London, I realised that one of the lost rivers, the Tyburn, ran roughly underneath the pathways of the walks in *Mrs. Dalloway*, from Regent's Park, across Brook Street, and down to Westminster. And in that, there seems to be a literal source for the songs and 'streams' in the novel:

> As the ancient song bubbled up opposite Regent's Park Tube Station . . . though it issued from so rude a mouth, a mere hole in the earth . . . still the old bubbling burbling song, soaking through the knotted roots of infinite ages and skeleton and treasure, streamed

> away in rivulets over the pavement and all along the Marylebone Road. (*MD*, p. 81)

This river of song that trickles down toward Westminster provides a counterpoint to the vertical journeys of Clarissa, Peter and Septimus and an underground accompaniment to Richard's stroll back home.

The drafts of this passage in the manuscript of *Mrs. Dalloway* confirm that Woolf's vision of the bubbling brook in the novel was specifically pre-historic and female: 'There was an age when the pavement was grass; another when it was swamp; an age of tusk and mammoth . . . and through them all the battered woman – for she wore a skirt . . . stood singing of love' (*WF*, p. 96). This archaic female figure reappears in *Women and Fiction*, the manuscript of *A Room of One's Own*, linking the old woman in Regent's Park with the prehistoric marshland of Westminster. Just as Woolf is walking down statue-strewn Whitehall – at the same place Peter was when the boys went by – she thinks about feeling alone in a crowd, like an outsider and has a vision of 'the primeval woman in a tree; lamenting so it seems the course that human destiny must take' (*WF*, p. 144).

From the discussion and illustration of London statues in Hare, to their literary rendition in Whitten, to their listing in Lucas, Woolf had access to a wealth of information of London's statues. Hare's critical attitude towards these markers of primarily masculine accomplishment is echoed and extended in another volume in the Woolf library: *The People's Album of London Statues,* a delightfully irreverent assortment of comments on 'this world of petrified supermen' (Sitwell and Hamnett, 1928, p. 9) written by Osbert Sitwell with drawings by Nina Hamnett, published by Duckworth in 1928. Like Woolf, Sitwell mourns the gradual invasion of the city by a 'stone mob' (Sitwell and Hamnett, 1928, p. 46), going so far as to suggest that

> Just as traffic has now perforce to be regulated, so should the mob of statues have adequate police supervision. A Controller of Inanimate People should be appointed by the Government or municipality. (Sitwell and Hamnett, 1928, p. 56)

And also like Woolf, Sitwell and Hamnett are attracted to the statues of 'those least celebrated today' such as the statue of the man with his dog on the cover of their book and the Waterbearer which Woolf singled out in her Lucas review, as opposed to those who have 'made the world safe for plutocracy' (Sitwell and Hamnett, 1928, p. 33).

This connection of the prehistoric past of London with anonymous women, with hidden sources of water and with the modern diversity and freedom of the tides of crowds in London's streets, contrasted with the petrified present of statues of great men, continues to appear in Woolf's writing of the 1930s. Susan Squire's analysis of the essays in *The London Scene* (1932) shows a clear continuation of this complex. Squire notes how both "The Docks of London and "Great Men's Houses" establish 'a vision of London divided between messy, exploitative male masters and overburdened female housekeepers' (Squire, 1985, p. 55). This corresponds to a vertical distinction between the 'male parlour and the female scullery' (Squire, 1985, p. 61), particularly in the Carlyle's house where the lack of running water laid on in the house meant a life of hard labour for 'harassed women carrying tins cans' of water from the well in the basement to the great man's rooms above (*LS*, p. 24). Of course, "Oxford Street Tide" continues the motif of the diversity of London's streets being like a flowing river. And in the last published essay in *The London Scene*, "This is the House of Commons", Woolf completes the complex by returning to the idea that men in Whitehall get petrified into statues, even in the 'irreverent [House of] Commons' (*LS*, p. 41). Woolf ends *The London Scene* calling for a union between the 'democracy which makes halls' and 'the aristocracy which carved statues' (*LS*, p. 43), a reiteration of her call for androgynous synthesis at the end of *A Room of One's Own*, but only recognisable as such if we know the hidden rivers of association which run under her mental map of London, a map first sketched out in her own London library.

The rest of the books on London housed in Leonard and Virginia's library offer fewer possibilities for analysis of influence on Woolf's work. Several appear to be presentation copies: Kathleen Woodward's collection of short stories about women living in South London, *Jipping Street* (1929), is inscribed by Leonard, 'V.S.W from K.W.'; and, appearing a year later from the Hogarth Press, there is Francis Oscar Mann's volume, *St. James Park and Other Poems*. Later, there is a Fabian Tract (no. 243) by Albert Emil Davies, a historical sketch of *The London City Council: 1889–1937* and a copy of *Government and Misgovernment of London*, presented by the author, William Robson, to Leonard in 1939. The one book that seems to speak to Virginia's continuing interest in the music of her native streets is William Kent's *Encyclopaedia of London*. Her 1937 (first) edition was evidently used and treasured enough to be rebound with a russet leather spine, labelled in Virginia's hand 'London–Kent'.[8] She glued the end papers to the plain white paper of her new binding so that the volume opens directly to the title page, which is inscribed with

the very same quotation from Shelley cited at the beginning of the first two London books she ever owned, once more evoking: 'London, that great sea whose ebb and flow/ At once is deaf and loud'.

Notes

1. The copy of Whitten's *London in Song* held at Washington State University has a plain white cover, instead of the gilded one also available. Its Quaker simplicity is decorated with a rather childish sketch of several people going for a walk, including, perhaps, a dog.
2. Most of Cowper's poem is devoted to praising the benefits of retiring from the city to pursue the spiritual pleasures of the contemplative life; Hare and Whitten manage to find the handful of lines in the poem which are positive about the city. Virginia Stephen often reiterates Cowper-like praise of rural tranquility, but with a slight sense of mockery that shows her to be of Lamb's party.
3. The copy of Leonard Woolf's collection of *Essays on Literature, History, Politics Etc.*, published by the Hogarth Press in 1927, comments on Lucas, who is presented as an exemplar of egotistical writing.
4. The Woolfs rented Hogarth House in Richmond, Surrey, from 1915–1924. This is where the Hogarth Press was originally established.
5. The statue is still in place, located in Bloomsbury at the entrance to Coram Fields, where Lamb's Conduit intersects with Guilford Street.
6. Gutter Lane was also one of the street names Leonard noted in Acres. It is tempting to speculate that Leonard was researching for Virginia who wanted a street name associated with flowing water, and settled on Brook Street since Gutter Lane has no actual aqueous history. I have found no reason why Leonard would be particularly interested in London streets or streams.
7. Additionally, Sonita Sarker's article "Locating a Native Englishness in Virginia Woolf's *The London Scene*" focuses on the relationship of race and nation and, through examinations of statues and other public monuments in *The London Scene*, demonstrates how Woolf reclaims England from 'great men' for the common woman (Sarker, 2001).
8. Otherwise, it may have been bought at a used bookstall; the underlying binding looks like it might have come from a library.

7
Sense of Self and Sense of Place in *Orlando*: Virginia Woolf's Aesthetics of Pantomime

Caroline Marie

Virginia Woolf was an open-minded and enthusiastic theatre-goer who enjoyed experimental plays, as well as musicals and pantomimes. She was fully aware of the culture of her time and, along with some high-brow playwrights, she drew upon popular performing arts, adapted some of their features in developing her own aesthetic concerns and translated[1] them into her own poetics. In this chapter, I draw parallels between Woolf's novel *Orlando* (1928) and modern dramatic texts, performances and moving pictures. In so doing, I do not draw up a mere list of potential or likely influences on Woolf, but rather explore how different pantomimic devices and practices are transferred into Woolf's fiction. In my analyses, I deal with the modes of intersemiotic translation from drama (*mimesis*) to narrative (*diegesis*) within the context of modernist culture.

At the turn of the twentieth century, pantomime hinged on two types of transformation: either transformation scenes which deliberately metamorphosed characters into *commedia dell'arte* stereotypes or transformations which instantly took characters from one place to another. In *I Scream for Ice Cream*, Gyles Brandreth associates the *extravaganza* with breathtaking transformation scenes:

> While lions and tigers and bears (literally), railway trains, oceanic liners, forests, fountains and life-size fairy-castles appeared on stage thanks to Beverley[2] and his many imitators the pantomime's chief scenic effect and most magical moment had to be the transformation scene, when drapes went down, cloths went up, trap-doors opened, revolves revolved, and the audience suddenly found itself in the Valley of Dreams or the Kingdom of Kindness or the Land of Everlasting Love. (Brandreth, 1974, p. 82)

In *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf borrows both kinds of transformations, spatial transformation through changes of setting and ontological transformation of character, expressing the changeability of the relationship between an unsteady world and a plural self, thereby inscribing the self within a complex, multi-layered temporality. This is in keeping with the philosophy of her time, which I highlight below.

Pantomime's transformation scenes construct a reality in which both self and place are intrinsically mutable. In March 1897, Woolf went to the Prince of Wales's Theatre to see *La Poupée, an Impossible Play*,[3] a musical sharing some features with pantomime. The production dramatises the constant interplay between unstable self and place: to save his monastery, Father Maximin wants novice-monk Lancelot to marry, in order to get the dowry his drunken old uncle promised on condition that he should take a wife. According to Father Maximin's plan, Lancelot is to 'marry' a doll from the shop of Maître Hilarius. But Lancelot unwittingly chooses Hilarius' daughter Alésia, hiding among the dolls to conceal from her father the fact that she damaged one of them. When Lancelot finds out that he married a woman instead of a doll, he prefers to give up his tonsure than his wife.[4] In Act One, the monastery undergoes some 'instantaneous change' to Hilarius' doll shop, and Act Two takes the characters from the shop back to the monastery thanks to another 'instantaneous change'. Such immediate, unmediated changes of place may be read as the indexes of Alésia's transformation into a doll, and from a doll back to a flesh and blood human being; it also announces Lancelot's change of status. Transformation scenes thus express the fundamental ontological unsteadiness of any human being in theatrical terms.

Changes of place are triggered off by the enfolding of the plot so that narrative (internal) logic organises the sequence of events, rather than natural (external) logic. Furthermore, changes are brought forth by the characters' thoughts and desires: when Lancelot needs to choose a bride, the monastery immediately changes to the doll shop; the second 'instantaneous change' from the doll shop to the monastery answers and helps actualise Alésia's urge to turn from the impersonation of a doll back to her real human self. In the process, what the monastery symbolises has evolved: in Act One it represents Lancelot's monastic vows, and, therefore, the limitation of his individual willpower, whereas in Act Two it visualises the voluntary alienation Lancelot is renouncing to gain love and freedom. Neither self nor place exist as independent realities, but construct one another through constant reassessment of the sense of their interrelation. In *Orlando* as well as on the pantomime

stage, transformation of place and transformation of self are intrinsically connected. That is the reason why Orlando's selves vary according to place: 'one will only come if it is raining, another in a room with green curtains, another when Mrs Jones is not there' (*O*, p. 308). *La Poupée*'s articulation of change of place, change of self and the actualisation of desire bears some resemblance to *Orlando*.

Woolf integrates the aesthetics of pantomime into *Orlando* by highlighting the artificial and mechanical quality of the moments when the English landscape turns into a Turkish background, or when Turkey is changed into England. Such mechanical transformations bear a resemblance to *La Poupée*, as well as Aladdin,[5] a pantomime Woolf saw in Drury Lane in January 1897. Since the book of words for that particular show is not to be found in any library, it is necessary to turn to George Bernard Shaw for a description of the '*de rigueur*', yet not 'out of date', 'thirteen changes and a transformation' (Shaw, 1931, pp. 24, 28). Not only were transformation scenes not yet out of date, but they were finding their way into highbrow drama and fiction.

At first, the description of the countryside surrounding Orlando sounds like the *ekphrasis* of a landscape painting with its emphasis on perspective: 'The fields were marked with black tree clumps, and beyond the fields stretched long woodlands, and there was the gleam of a river, and then hills again' (*O*, p. 325). Then lighting effects bring about mechanical movement redolent of the pantomime's transformation scene, so that the description shifts from the pictorial to the theatrical: 'the landscape (it must have been some trick of the fading light) shook itself, heaped itself, let all this encumbrance of houses, castles, and woods slide off its tent-shaped side' (*O*, p. 326). This animated lightning of the setting brings about a change of (diegetic) scenery:[6] 'The bare mountains of Turkey were before her' (*O*, p. 326). The point is not that Orlando's journey from England to Turkey is omitted from the narrative, which would only pertain to the common process of selection which shapes any narrative, but that, although Orlando's journey in space exists neither in the story nor in the narrative, the change of scenery brings forth a change in his *sense* of place. The shapes originally evocative of Western architecture come to connote Turkish mountain peaks as Orlando's train of thoughts evolves. Therefore, in the novel, place is not so much constructed as given geographical datum as subjective experience. The mechanical change of place is triggered off by Orlando's thoughts and desire which it enfolds in space.

In *Johnson Over Jordan, A Modern Reality Play*, which Virginia Woolf saw at the Sackville Theatre in 1934, John B. Priestley also resorts

to transformation scenes to mirror the character's train of thoughts. Johnson, who dies before the onset of the play, walks from his home to his office, and from there to his insurance company and finally to a night club as he gradually becomes aware of and comes to terms with his current condition. After he pockets his life insurance money, there appears a place where he may splurge it:

> While he is stuffing the last of the notes in his pockets, what seemed before the small opening down to a furnace is now revealed as a decorated and brightly-illuminated corridor, and along this corridor comes the sound of a dance band. (Priestly, 1948, p. 298)

In both *Johnson over Jordan* and *Orlando* transformation scenes take the characters directly to places that exactly match their memories or desires, which they allow the audience or reader to visualise. That modelling of place onto the observer's thoughts is expressed in *Orlando* through the imagery of sculpting and carving, as, for instance, when the 'chalky cliffs' (*O*, p. 162) of Dover are compared with the ghost of Sasha and then with 'a dome of smooth, white marble' which replaces Sasha's face with that of Shakespeare, whose forehead is like a dome. At this point, the shift from reality to subjectivity is reversed as 'the image of the marble dome' (*O*, p. 164) which conjured up memories of Sasha and Shakespeare is defined as 'no figment, but reality', so that the visual image gives way to 'the truth'. The change of place appears to be related to Woolf's 'moments of being', a brief adjustment of two unstable instances, the perceiving consciousness and the perceived reality. Indeed, changeable self and place soon cease to coincide when the very intensity of the vision annihilates it: 'All was so clear and minute that she could see a daw pecking for worms in the snow. [. . .] All was swallowed up' (*O*, p. 151). The shaping of what may be referred to as 'mental architecture' questions the received articulation between objectivity and subjectivity as neither self nor place are seen to exist independently, but both are described as the result of their mutual shaping. Transformation scenes fashion the world according to the character's psyche; in return, the self is shaped in relation to its environment, as evidenced by the description of Orlando's mind through the metaphor of sculpture: 'the cathedral tower which was her mind' (*O*, p. 164). From that perspective, Orlando's train of thought is 'irrelevant' (*O*, p. 164) only according to common spatio-temporal logic, but it is perfectly coherent once the reader accepts the reversal which organises logic according to psychological time (inner duration) rather than mathematical time (clock time).

That the self is an ever-evolving entity, always in the process of being carved, is expressed through another metaphor borrowed from pantomime, the projection of slides, yet another device used by pantomimes to change places. That Woolf was conversant with the magical lantern is beyond doubt. In December 1940, she asked Angelica Bell, who was to give a lecture on the stage, whether she could 'project [her] photographs on a lantern' (*L*4, p. 452). A month later, she reflected on the difference between the magic lantern and the epidiascope, the etymology of which she discussed in a letter to Vita Sackville-West: 'we must get a lantern. The Epi-dia-scope (Greek for looking through & over I think)[7] wont take slides only photographs' (*L*4, p. 462). In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes rejects the conventional analogy between photography and painting and establishes an analogy between photography and theatre, based on the fact that when Louis Daguerre borrowed Nicéphore Niepce's invention he owned a theatre on the Place de la République in Paris where he projected panoramas (also know as Dioramas), and contends that both photography and Diorama may be categorised as performing arts. Barthes defines photography as a dual chemical and physical process, as an intersection of two quite distinct processes; chemical: the action of light on certain substances, and physical: the formation of the image through an optical device (Barthes, 1981). I shall proceed to suggest how the occasions of 'looking over' and 'looking through' that are found in Woolf's translations of the epidiascope's etymology constitute two modes of representation of self in relation to space and time in *Orlando*, and that they coincide with the chemical and mechanical procedures of photography as distinguished by Barthes.

'Looking over', the juxtaposition of a series of stills, corresponds to the mechanical procedure of photography. Pantomime carries out changes of places in juxtaposing several painted settings, thus creating an impression of movement through the succession of fixed images. That scenographic feature may be compared with the way parataxis creates a diegetic impression of movement through enumeration in *Orlando*, as when the boy dashes to greet the Queen: 'He dashed downhill. He let himself in at a wicket gate. He tore up the winding staircase. He reached his room' (*O*, p. 20). Such paratactic juxtaposition of disconnected actions may be read as a diegetic translation of the projection of slides on a magic lantern: transitions are similarly omitted, and it is their very absence which generates not only an impression of movement, but also an impression of speed.

Orlando's 'looking over' aesthetics combine the two senses of the verb: to 'peruse or inspect cursorily' as well as to 'ignore, leave out

of consideration' (*OED*). Series of disconnected actions or places are cursorily juxtaposed and the transitions from one to the next are overlooked. In this perspective, *Orlando*'s major structuring device, paratactic juxtaposition, may be called cinematographic and is to be understood in the light of the transition from magic lantern slides to photography to cinema, which was taking place at the time. References to the filmic medium are perhaps most striking when Orlando is at the wheel of a motor car: driving through London, that is to say, on immobile lanes, Orlando gets an impression of speed through juxtaposition and parataxis, but speed is the result of her own movement[8] which the text renders through a verbal equivalent of cinematographic editing, juxtaposing places, 'Here was a market. Here a funeral' (*O*, p. 306), as well as unreadable fragmented texts, 'banners upon which was written "Ra–Un", but what else? [. . .] Amor Vin – that was over a porch' (*O*, p. 306). Space is constructed as a sense of place rather than as a stable, objective reality, a relation between setting and beholder to be experienced, rather than a simple given. The novel thus raises the question of the function of the observer in the aesthetic process. Orlando, speeding through London, 'change[s] her selves as quickly as she dr[ives]' (*O*, p. 310), emphasising the connection between the senses of space and place and of self. Place and self grow denser in relation to one another: '[n]othing is any longer one thing. I take up a handbag and I think of an old bumboat woman frozen in the ice' (*O*, p. 305), but everything is part of Orlando's experience of reality, so that both the character's sense of place and his sense of self function as palimpsests, superimpositions of slides through which one looks back on the past, all the layers of which are in contact with the present moment.

'Looking through', the superimposition of magic lantern slides, corresponds to the chemical procedure of photography as defined by Barthes, and allows a complex temporality to be inscribed within the narrative. The narrator-biographer describes how 'the little fig-tree under which Orlando lay only served to print patterns of fig-leaves upon her light burnous' (*O*, p. 150), and wonders whether such photographic imprint is to be attributed to a 'trick' or to a 'miracle' of nature. Woolf resorts to one of pantomime's most popular tricks to bring forth a poetic miracle. As in experimental drama, she uses what may be referred to as the 'stained-glass aesthetics' so as to de-realise representation and achieve what Strindberg called a 'dematerialisation' based on formal and semiotic uncertainty and ambiguity.

Modern dramatists did not merely consider projection as a spectacular device, but used it expressively. When Edward Gordon Craig directed

Ibsen's *The Vikings* at the Imperial Theatre in 1903, he used the light to reveal the unsaid: 'Particularly impressive was the church scene (IV, 1) where he created his atmosphere mainly through vertical lines with sunlight shafting through an unseen stained glass window to cast a multi-coloured pool of light on the floor' (Woodfield, 1984, p. 154). The tension between coincidence and dissidence, between perfectly-matched or ill-adjusted superimposed shapes and colours, defines reality as filtered and allows the very process of perception, both as sensual contact and as critical distance to be inscribed within the novel, in accordance with the meaning of 'look through' is defined as 'directing one's sight through (an aperture, a transparent body, or something having interstices)' or 'penetrating the dishonesty or pretence of' (*OED*).

In *Murder in the Cathedral*, T. S. Eliot represented the psychology of a character at odds with himself. The first act shows Archbishop Thomas Becket subject to three tempters who embody his own moral struggle with his own impulses on stage: the audience are let into 'the inside of his head', to borrow Arthur Miller's working title for *Death of a Salesman*. Woolf saw Eliot's play at the Mercury in November 1935. When it was revived in October 1936, as she must have been aware, some expressionist televisual experiment was carried out. Stage director E. Martin Brown remembers that '[t]he production marked the first experiment in superimposition; each Tempter was superimposed on the image of Becket as he emerged into the Bishop's conscious mind' (Brown, 1969, p. 68). At first, Becket, who is in his hall, resists temptation, but he finally gives in. The dramatic text then resorts to the device of the transformation scene and: 'They drag him off. While the CHORUS speak, this scene is changed to the cathedral' (Eliot, 1965, p. 76). The superimposition materialises all the possible courses of a mind divided against itself and the unconcealed change of place illustrates Becket's resolution to sacrifice. Woolf resorts to similar a 'slide effect' to make Orlando's state of mind visible, when Orlando's hand becomes 'instantly coloured red, blue, and yellow like a butterfly's wing' (*O*, p. 14) while he walks under the family stained glass window representing 'the yellow body of an heraldic leopard' (*O*, p. 14). The projection of coloured light symbolises his choice of literature in preference to the art of warfare, as the wild animal turns into a multi-coloured butterfly. The superimposition of colours allows a visualisation of Orlando's true self so that it can be said that in *Orlando* artifice leads to quintessence.

However it may be that Eliot's and Woolf's perspectives differ. T. S. Eliot highlights deliberation, whereas Woolf omits it. Paradoxically

enough, the sense of freedom in *Orlando* derives from the outright leaving out of intent or causality caused by paratactic juxtaposition, as in the *extravaganza*. It is as though Orlando, who is compared with a puppet walking 'as if her legs were moved for her' (*O*, p. 321), were acted upon by some superior force leading her from place to place: 'She had no time to reach her hand towards the knocker before both wings of the great door were flung open' (*O*, p. 169). The time of the magical actualisation of unexpressed wishes, or 'miracles' in the context of pantomime, supersedes mathematical time. Life seems to outstrip human desire; paradoxically, in such apparent deprivation of willpower lies freedom. To assess what Woolf's aesthetics of pantomime imply, it is necessary to leave Bloomsbury and turn to the French philosophy that was popular in her time.

Orlando's successive changes are coherent in that they express his/her genuine yet unspoken self: 'what strange powers are these that penetrate our most secret ways and change our most treasured possessions without our willing it?' (*O*, p. 68), the biographer wonders after Orlando's first trance in the second chapter. The trance, which numbs intent and choice, parallels Henri Bergson's free act, defined as revolutionary and unpredictable. In *Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson defines identity as 'remaining itself – that is to say, evolving' (Bergson, 1911, pp. 47–8), which casts light on Orlando' change of sex after the second trance: 'The change of sex, though it altered their future, did nothing whatever to alter their identity' (*O*, p. 138). Free acts are not to be confused with unreasonable whims; on the contrary they define the true self in a spontaneous way through the pursuing of 'variable and indeterminate directions, at the end of which are free acts' (Bergson, 1911, p. 255), just as Orlando's life takes 'unexpected turn[s]' (*O*, p. 189), in keeping with pantomime's aesthetics of surprise, as well as Bergson's conception of life as creation.

Artistic creation is similarly described as completely unrelated to desire or intentionality, as Orlando's words are said to form themselves 'involuntarily' (*O*, p. 246) on paper as though the 'spirit of the age' were being expressed through his/her writing. However, Orlando should not be understood as a mere mouthpiece of some pre-existing, predetermined spirit of the age, since that spirit can only be known once it has been expressed, that is to say, it is shaped by Orlando's words. In Bergson's terms: 'it creates, as it goes on, not only the forms of life, but the ideas that will enable the intellect to understand it, the terms which will serve to express it'. (Bergson, 1911, p. 103) In Bergson's post-Darwinian perspective, as well as in Virginia Woolf's meta-aesthetic novel, life and creation are intrinsically intertwined.

Bergson's free act cannot be disconnected from his conception of time as a multi-layered instance. Orlando's perception of time as a palimpsest – William Shakespeare's face replacing that of Sasha 'as one lantern slide is half seen through the next' (*O*, p. 79) – similarly defines the present moment as the dynamic recapturing of juxtaposed, paratactic ('looked over'), as well as superimposed ('looked through') images. This highlights the fact that the present moment is to be sensed rather than objectively determined, as when Orlando sees ice blocks dating back to the Great Frost behind the London omnibuses and an old nobleman behind her car who 'had sunk there, where her car stood' (*O*, p. 304). Orlando concludes that '[t]ime has passed over [her]'. Ultimately, these successive moments are preserved in parallel layers of the past which come to the surface when conjured up in the present: 'I see mountains. Turkey? India? Persia?' (*O*, p. 305). The self is constructed in time as well as in space: it does not change so much as accumulate layers which are at once successive and simultaneous, as though preserved in some incremental memory. Orlando's personality accumulates strata, 'one on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand', they 'have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own' (*O*, p. 308). Such a multifarious self can run the risk of secession from itself; the implications of such a representation of identity are ethical: how is it possible that a being so intrinsically divided, fragmented, at odds with themselves should be free? How define the freedom of such a dissident being?

Such paradoxes – freedom outstrips willpower; senses of self, place and time fashion one another; change allows continuance – are deftly expressed through the disjunctive powers of the performing arts. In borrowing from the pantomime, Woolf kept up with the aesthetics of modernism, which reaches truth through artifice. In this light, her conception of self as a parade of embodiments is close to that of Georges Méliès's, in his two-minute film *L'Homme-orchestre* (1900). At the end of the novel, the biographer conjures up Orlando's past and present selves:

> Orlando may now have called on the boy who cut the nigger's head down; the boy who strung it up again; the boy who sat on the hill; the boy who saw the poet; the boy who handed the Queen the bowl of rose water; or she may have called upon the young man who fell in love with Sasha; or upon the Courtier; or upon the Ambassador; or upon the Soldier; or upon the Traveller; or she may have wanted the woman to come to her; the Gipsy; the Fine Lady; the Hermit; the girl

> in love with life; the Patroness of Letters; the woman who is called Mar (meaning hot baths and evening fires) or Shelmerdine (meaning crocuses in autumn woods) or Bonthrop (meaning the death we die daily) or all three together. (*O*, p. 309)

Similarly, Georges Méliès, director of and only actor in *L'Homme-orchestre*, literally turns himself into a one-man band. He subdivides himself into six musicians and a conductor. The technique of superimposition, which was to be used by Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral*, shows his new self being born out of the old one and jumping onto the next seat. After a few seconds' playing together, Méliès folds his seven different selves into one and walks off stage, just as Orlando 'somehow contrive[s] to synchronise the sixty or seventy different times which beat simultaneously in every human system' (*O*, p. 199), at once 'looking over' and 'looking through'. Méliès secedes from himself; yet, perhaps, he is never so intensely himself as during that brief harmonious cooperation between every aspect of his multi-level self. *L'Homme-orchestre*, just like *Orlando*, shows modern identity snowballing, to quote from *Creative Evolution*, it 'goes on increasing – rolling upon itself as a snowball on the snow' (Bergson, 1911, p. 2) to the verge of alienation from itself, ever refusing to resolve itself in synthesis. Virginia Woolf, just as T. S. Eliot and J. B. Priestley, the highbrow playwrights, and Georges Méliès, the popular illusionist, borrowed from the stage practices verging on stereotypes and fitted them to her own purpose of redefining the modern self, thereby reviving them in the process.

Notes

1. I use the term 'translation' because it implies a transfer from one language (filmic) to another language (textual).
2. A painter at the Lyceum.
3. In the entry for Sunday 7 March 1897, Virginia mentions being invited to this show (PA, p. 50).
4. See Gänzl, Kurt, *The Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*, London: Blackwell, 1994, pp. 1167–8.
5. Virginia mentions going to this show in *A Passionate Apprentice* (Monday 4 January 1897, *PA*, p. 7).
6. Of course the term 'scenery' is to be read metaphorically since the setting is by no means a three-dimensional cardboard scenographic representation, but a descriptive unit.

7. The *OED* defines the term as 'An optical projector giving images of both opaque and transparent objects'. The French dictionary *Le Robert* dates the word from the 1930s and confirms the etymology put forward by Woolf.
8. On the filmic quality of windows and moving cars, see Rachel Bowlby, 'Virginia Woolf and the Shop-Window'. *Things in Virginia Woolf's Works*. Eds. Christine Reynier and Catherine Bernard. Bordeaux: Université Michel de Montaigne-Bordeaux III, 1999, pp. 69–78.

8

'My own ghost met me': Woolf's 1930s Photographs, Death and Freud's Acropolis

Maggie Humm

The photographs taken by the Woolfs in the early 1930s are important examples of portraiture and represent an extensive life narrative of themselves and their friends. Photographic portraits are very composed, constructed forms that suggest the photographer's identification with the subject (Dexter, 2003). By incorporating traces of their makers' histories as well as the everyday moment, the Woolfs' photographs mediate between past and present. Monk's House Album 3, one of the Woolfs' seven photo albums, contains photographs taken between 1931 and 1934 of many of their friends: Roger Fry, Lydia and Maynard Keynes, John Lehmann, Alice Ritchie, Charles Siepmann, Angus Davidson, Molly and Desmond MacCarthy, Tom and Vivienne Eliot, Stella Benson, Wogan and Rosamond Phillips, Peter and Prudence Lucas, Vita Sackville-West, as well as relatives: Ann and Judith Stephen, Vanessa Bell, Clive Bell, Duncan Grant and Vanessa's children. The disparate locales in the photographs include Greece, Italy and Ireland, but Monk's House, where Leonard and Virginia developed their photographs, is the preferred setting.

In the albums sitters are photographed with distinct presences and deeper meanings are suggested through the accumulation and sequencing of photographic motifs. The large number of repeated portraits reveals the Woolfs' need for a constant visual discourse of friendship during the 1930s. Portraying the density of friendship by means of repetition clearly expressed their desire for a collective 'history' at a time of great social and cultural change. This period of photography is concurrent with a time, in Virginia's diaries and letters, of almost constant descriptions of the contemporary deaths of many of her friends as well as reminiscences of family deaths, particularly those of her brother Thoby and her father Leslie Stephen which the contemporary reflections evoked.

Leonard and Virginia were involved in many social and political developments in the 1930s. The worldwide Depression following the General Strike and US stock market crash was met in Britain by the downfall of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government and his formation of a National government on 24 August 1931. As Hermione Lee argues, Leonard as the co-editor of the *Political Quarterly* founded in that year 'was caught up, from now on, in what he called "the intelligent man's way to prevent war"' (Lee, 1996, p. 617). The year 1931 was one of unprecedented and brutal developments both at home and abroad. Japan's invasion of Manchuria in September 1931 weakened Leonard's faith in the League of Nations. Public demands for women's emancipation diminished during the 1930s with feminist efforts subdued by the realities of economic recession and the rise of Fascism (Rowbotham, 1997, p. 173). The 1931 Anomalies Act, although introduced by a woman minister Margaret Bondfield, made it difficult for unemployed married women to qualify for benefit, disqualified 180,000 married women from assistance and was attacked by Woolf's friends, including Selina Cooper, at Central Hall in 1933 (Rowbotham, 1997, p. 174). The year before the Act was passed, in 1930, Virginia wrote the introduction to the collected letters of the Women's Co-operative Guild as an autobiographical heuristic understanding of working-class women's social and political injustices (Woolf, 1977).

The response of the Hogarth Press to these developments took the form of a generational divide. The press published pamphlets about the League and other political institutions and Virginia's 'Letter to a Young Poet' in 1932. As Harold Nicolson argued, the pamphlets were 'epistles in which the generation of 1910 confronts the generation of 1932' (Lee, 1996, p. 618). The publications represent not so much an estrangement from present change, but a mediation of that change through a discursive past. A similar palimpsest reading of the present informed by the past marked other 1930s publications, for example F. R. Leavis's *New Bearings in English Poetry*, in which modernism is represented by G. M. Hopkins as much as by T. S. Eliot (Leavis, 1932). But Leavis' attempt to fix the instabilities of culture and literature with a humanistic attention to English organicism was not shared by the Woolfs.

The Woolfs lived in the modern world, broadcasting on the BBC (Leonard's "The Modern State", a series of six talks, was delivered in October and November 1931), going to movies, enjoying constant photography as well as visits to the 1931 Olympia Motor Exhibition and approving a car, 'The Star, which indeed we could buy if we wished', probably the Little Comet Fourteen costing £354 (*D*4, p. 50). The Woolfs'

income rose dramatically in the 1930s. *Flush* (1932) sold 50,000 copies and by 1937 *The Years* was a best seller in the United States second only to *Gone with the Wind* and Man Ray's photograph of Virginia appeared on the cover of *Time* (Silver, 1999, p. 79).

This more complex experience of modernity and modernism, as a disparate formation interweaving past and present, high and popular cultures and Virginia's defence of the 'common reader', is at odds with many of her contemporary critics. For example the architect Reginald Blomfield, hostile to Roger Fry's ideas, claimed that 'since the war, Modernism, or *Modernismus*, as it should be called on the German precedent, has invaded this country like an epidemic . . . its attack is insidious . . . whether it is communism or not, "Modernismus" is a vicious movement which threatens that literature and art which is our last refuge from a world that is becoming more and more mechanized everyday' (Blomfield, 1934, pp. 52–3). *The Studio* art journal editorial in 1932 agreed 'Britain is looking for British pictures of British people, of British landscapes' (*The Studio*, 1932, p. 64). This common fear of modernism as foreign is far removed from Bloomsbury's association with international modernism, for example Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant's attention to the work of Matisse and the French avant-garde. In Britain, Vanessa and Duncan worked with cutting edge modern industrial techniques and with Allan Walton one of the most forward-looking textile producers of the 1930s, who transferred several of Bell and Grant's painterly designs onto a gleaming rayon-faced cloth that intensified and reflected light (Mendes, 1979). The fabrics were sold at Fortnum and Mason and major London outlets (Spalding, 1983, p. 258).

Woolf too made linkages between modernity and modernism. Her photographs and her writings about painting, including, for example, *Walter Sickert: A Conversation* (1934), result from attention to a more mass-mediated imaginary. Sickert asked Woolf to write about a retrospective exhibition of his paintings shown in November 1933 at Agnew and Son because he felt that Woolf would best represent the literary qualities of the work. But Woolf interestingly begins her essay with one of her favourite dinner party scenes in which guests discuss whether driving in London is helped or hindered by the 'new system of coloured lights', a discussion which Woolf transmogrifies into an extended analysis of colour and spectatorship (*WS*, p. 5). The introduction in Britain of three-coloured traffic lights in 1928–9 was followed by the Road Traffic Act of 1934 which introduced a 30 mph speed limit in urban areas, driving tests, fines for jay-walking, and sanctuary lanes (pedestrian crossings). Just as modernism was considered to be too risky

and continental by many critics in Britain, so too were traffic lights, although they had been adopted in the United States in 1918, and in France in 1922. Woolf was equally attentive to other new technologies, buying with Leonard on 23 July 1931, 'a superb Zeiss camera' (probably the Lloyd or Nixe rather than the more expensive Cocarette model of 1929) and pleased that 'my Kodak can be made perfect for 5/-' (five shillings) (*L*4, p. 361). In 1931 a Kodak 120 film of eight exposures cost one shilling (the same price as one packet of twenty cigarettes or two packets of Pears soap). Sickert himself was very aware of photographic techniques and, during the 1930s, transfigured newspaper photographs into formal paintings. Sickert's *Edward VIII* (1936) endows a popular media image of the king with advanced modernist painterly handling. The King, when Prince of Wales, was archetypally modern. He persuaded the Post Office to use up-to-date phones, loved fast cars and supported the Royal Academy's first modernist exhibition "British Art in Industry" by affirming that 'simplicity in line, form and decoration is, I think, what modern taste demand' (Hogben, 1979, p. 68).

Beginning in 1931, Woolf too collected photographs and newspaper cuttings in her effort to document the differing social, economic, political and cultural positions of men and women in this period. The photographs and cuttings, together with quotations and letters, Woolf mounted into three scrapbooks whose pages, which included information about education, sexuality, politics and social values, were sources for *Three Guineas* (1938). Woolf's prescient 'montage' of text, published photographs and 'narrated' images of the Spanish Civil War, which were not published in the book, produced a complex multi-generic work of feminist modernism (Humm, 2002). Woolf's use of photography is far in advance of the typical newspaper photographic reproductions of the 1930s, in which photographs are subordinate to stories until the arrival of *Picture Post* in 1938. Woolf's technique resembles the modernist photographer August Sander's universal language of photography with which 'we can communicate our thoughts, conceptions, and realities to all people on earth' (North, 1999, p. 109).

The 1930s for Woolf were also a period of self-reflection, particularly about her past and about death. Woolf's diaries and letters for 1931–4 contain her detailed thoughts about the contemporary deaths of fourteen people all of whom, apart from the king of Belgium, were personally known to Woolf, including her most intimate friends Lytton Strachey, Dora Carrington and Roger Fry, her half-brother George Duckworth and Leonard's sister Clara. Virginia and Leonard talked often about death and suicide during these years. After Goldie Dickinson's death 'at night

L & I talked of death the second time this year. We may be like worms crushed by a motor car' and Virginia dreamt that night of Angelica Bell dead (*D*4, p. 120). After Dora Carrington's suicide Woolf records 'we discuss suicide; & I feel, as always, ghosts' (*D*4, p. 83).

Woolf's 'witnessing' of multiple contemporary deaths during the 1930s and her memories of family deaths emerge in her writing: 'the end of The Waves. I wrote the words O Death fifteen minutes ago'; and shape the Woolfs' repetitious photographs (*D*4, p. 10). In a variety of ways, engaging with the example of another intellectual equally caught up with issues of visual memory and the psyche in these years can provide a valuable lens through which Woolf's writings and photographs can be studied. Reading other self-inscriptions, other performances of similar family memories, is a useful way of understanding technologies of memory, particularly if these performances involve identical events. There is one surprisingly tangential account, written in the 1930s, in which the writer's frame of reference and technology of memory are very close to Woolf's. One other writer, in particular, was creating an explanatory narrative of memories of his dead father in the context of social change and threats of war in the 1930s. Both Virginia Woolf and Sigmund Freud decided to revisit the Acropolis in the 1930s, Woolf in person and Freud in his memories and in writing. Woolf's first visit to Athens, with Vanessa, Thoby and Adrian, was in 1906 at the age of twenty-four, whereas Freud was forty-eight when he visited in 1904.

In 1936 Freud decided to celebrate the birthday of his admired friend the writer, musicologist and Nobel Prize winner Romain Rolland by writing an account for Rolland of Freud's 1904 Acropolis visit together with an explanation for why the visit had 'kept on recurring in my mind' and frequently troubled Freud during the intervening years (Freud, 1960, p. 239). Freud's eightieth birthday was also celebrated by an Address signed by nearly two hundred writers, including Rolland and Virginia Woolf. In May 1932 Woolf travelled to Greece, together with Leonard and Roger and Margery Fry. Perhaps not surprisingly, at the Acropolis Woolf thought that 'my own ghost met me' and had recurring memories of the death of her brother Thoby, who had died of typhoid after their 1906 visit, and of her father Leslie Stephen (*D*4, p. 90). Freud too, on returning to the Acropolis in his thoughts, also experienced memories of his brother and father (Freud, 1960, p. 248). Freud's account of those memories is ostensibly written for Rolland, who Freud greatly admired and saw to some extent as a symbolic father, although Rolland was younger than Freud, and the letter reads as a typical example of Freud's self-analysis. Importantly for Freud's

narrative, Rolland is the same age as Freud's brother, and both were ten years younger than Freud.

Freud's love of Hellenic culture is evident early in his life in his desire to name his brother Alexander the Great. Freud's view of history is, like the Greek's, circular in the sense that, to Freud, the past repeats itself in universal behaviours the meaning of which can be uncovered in an 'archaeological excavation' (Said, 2003, p. 27). In *Freud and the Non-European* Edward Said describes Freud's knowledge of the Greco-Roman world that Freud drew on repeatedly for 'psychoanalytic images and concepts' (Said, 2003, p. 15). Said's main focus is on Freud's representation of Moses as a non-European and how this destabilising history of Jewish identity is a model for identity in the modern world. But Said does note that, for Freud, Athens was a 'city of the mind' representing 'Freud's lifelong dedication to intellectual achievement' (Said, 2003, p. 38).

Freud shared Woolf's faith that narrative could free a selective blockage of memory. He articulates the case study as a narrative of self-analysis but, as in all his writings, the self-analysis is impregnated with similes and literary figures (Freud, 1960). The literary ambiguity begins in the title of the letter *Brief an Romain Rolland* (*Eine Erinnerungsstorung auf der Acropolis*), translated by Woolf's friends James and Alix Strachey as "A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis: An Open Letter to Romaine Rolland on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday" (Freud, 1960, p. 239). The translation adds the dimension of the public to Freud's private intent with the introduction of 'open' and 'occasion'. But the German is more ambiguous. 'Storung' in medical terminology is 'disorder' as much as 'disturbance' and 'erinnerung' means also a reminder, in the plural reminiscences, and in literature memoirs. So Freud's original title proposes a literary object with the possibility of uncovering a more disturbing medical 'disorder'.

Freud is the central character in his story of 'a phenomenon . . . which I myself had experienced a generation ago, in 1904, and which I had never understood, has kept on recurring in my mind. I did not at first see why; but at last I determined to analyse the incident' (Freud, 1960, p. 239). In 1904 Freud and his brother decided to travel to Corfu by way of Trieste, but while visiting his brother's business acquaintance in Trieste, they were persuaded instead to visit Athens. While waiting for the boat office to open, Freud and his brother wandered 'about the town in a discontented and irresolute frame of mind' (Freud, 1960, p. 240). Finally arriving at the Acropolis, Freud changed into his best shirt for the occasion. Only many years later did Freud come to understand that the experience of depression in Trieste and his surprise at

seeing the Acropolis were 'intimately connected' (Freud, 1960, p. 241). What motivates his behaviour, Freud believes, is a sense of guilt or inferiority which he couches as 'I'm not worthy of such happiness. I don't deserve it' (Freud, 1960, p. 242). Why, Freud asks, does the guilt arise in 'such a distorted and distorting disguise' (Freud, 1960, p. 243). This 'is known as a feeling of derealization [Entfremdungsgefuhl]' a similar phenomenon to depersonalisation or double consciousness (Freud, 1960, p. 244).

All these behavioural phenomena, Freud argues, 'serve the purpose of defence; they aim at keeping something away from the ego' (Freud, 1960, p. 245). What Freud realises he was keeping away from his ego in Trieste and at the Acropolis is his sense of guilt at having surpassed his father. The 'limitation and poverty of our conditions of life in my youth' meant that the joy of seeing the Acropolis was 'beyond the realms of possibility' for Freud's father (Freud, 1960, pp. 246–7). Freud and his brother experience extreme guilt in going 'further than one's father, . . . as though to excel one's father was still something forbidden' (Freud, 1960, p. 247). Freud's 'guilt' is still very much present in the 1930s, as is evident in his defensive switch to the impersonal pronoun 'one'. Freud concludes that what 'interfered with our enjoyment of the journey to Athens was a feeling of *filial piety*' because not only was Freud's father unable to visit Athens but his lack of 'secondary education' debars him, Freud feels, from understanding the significance of the Acropolis (Freud, 1960, pp. 247–8).

The episode is replete with generational tensions and struggles with the technologies of memory, as well as with Freud's conceptualisations of psychic structures in relation to memory, all tensions and struggles shared by Woolf. Freud's idea of the super-ego requires the internalisation of the father. Breaking into the mother/baby dyad, the father symbolises difference and the child is thrust into mourning and trauma facing the father's authority over the child's incestuous desires for the mother (Vice, 1996). Only by internalising the father, as well as his own aggressive impulses towards the father and subsequent guilt, can a child identify with historical and cultural meanings that symbolise the absent father. If the father is perceived to be 'underachieving' as Freud's father, then the child is frustrated in achieving a masculine identity within patriarchal culture. The Acropolis, both visually and historically, is an obvious phallic symbol and Freud's inability to sublimate his guilt seeing the Acropolis recalls those earlier struggles with the super-ego.

The issues Freud raises in the Acropolis letter are issues he was grappling with elsewhere in the 1930s, a period in which he was extensively

supplementing and adapting his previous theoretical writings. In these late lectures, grouped as *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and Other Works*, Freud, like a modernist writer, adopts a fragmentary style, appropriating direct quotations from early work together with new concepts including 'manifest dream' in a mixed media 'collage' (Marcus, 1985; Freud, 1960, p. 26). Freud revises "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes" (1925) and "Female Sexuality" (1931) into "Femininity" (1933) to say more about the 'psychical peculiarities of mature femininity' (Freud, 1960, p. 132). The revision involves Freud in a major recognition that 'the phase of the affectionate pre-Oedipal attachment [to the mother] is the decisive one for a woman's future' so that 'one gets the impression that a man's love and a woman's are a phase apart psychologically' (Freud, 1960, p. 134). This is also the year in which Albert Einstein was asked by Leonard's admired League of Nations to exchange views 'on any problem' and chose to ask Freud 'Why War?' (Freud, 1960, p. 199). Freud answered by again turning to the father to suggest that war could be prevented only by a 'growth of civilisation' and civilisation, to Freud, was only possible with the internalisation and sublimation of the father in culture (Freud, 1960, p. 215). Woolf too understood, in *Three Guineas*, that women were 'a phase apart' from men, but specifically attacks the incorporation of the phallic into civilisation and culture (Woolf, 1993).

Woolf's actual meeting with Freud later in January 1939 was not auspicious. 'Dr. Freud gave me a narcissus . . . A screwed up shrunk very old man . . . Difficult talk' (*D*5, p. 202). But after Freud's death, in September of that year, Woolf was 'gulping up Freud' and applying Freud's concept of 'ambivalence' to her mixed feelings about shopping (*D*5, p. 249). And Freud's exploration of memories of his father in his Acropolis letter and other case studies very much resemble Woolf's incorporation of memory fragments into her writings and photographs in the 1930s. Both resurrect memories by means of unreliable narrators who are relentlessly self-reflexive. Both adopt framing devices of discreditation. For example, Freud suggests that his Acropolis letter 'is the gift of an impoverished creature' who has 'seen better days' (Freud, 1960, p. 239). Woolf, with much less justification, felt that she too was ageing: 'I'm getting old myself – I shall be fifty next year; and I come to feel more and more how difficult it is to collect oneself into one Virginia' (*L*4, p. 397). Perhaps these feelings of physical age encouraged both Freud and Woolf to toy with extra sensory forms of perception. In his lecture 'Dreams and Occultism' (1933) Freud departs from his earlier fear of occultism's threat to his scientific *weltanschauung* to a more flexible consideration

of thought transference (Freud, 1960, p. 31). Similarly, although Woolf, in a letter to Vita Sackville-West, comically deflates W. B. Yeats' obsession with the occult, in her diary for October 1934 she describes Yeats' beliefs in greater detail. 'The Occult. That he believes in firmly. All his writing depends on it . . . but felt Yeats' extreme directness, simplicity & equality: liked his praise; liked him' (*D*4, pp. 256–7). In his introduction to his play *Fighting the Waves* (1934), Yeats claimed an affinity with Woolf's *The Waves* which he argued 'suggests a philosophy like that of the *Samkara* School of ancient India' (Yeats, 1963, p. 210).

In 1932 Woolf, like Freud, engaged with the fear of, or guilt at, surpassing the father. On 28 February, Woolf was invited to deliver the Clark lectures. 'This, I suppose, is the first time a woman has been asked; & so it is a great honour – think of me, the uneducated child reading books in my room at 22 H.P.G. – now advanced to this glory' (*D*4, p. 79). Woolf's father Sir Leslie Stephen gave the first Cambridge Clark lectures (founded in honour of William Clark Vice-Master of Trinity) in 1893, taking eighteenth-century literature as his subject. Although Woolf wanted to believe that her 'father would have blushed with pleasure' that his daughter 'was to be asked to succeed him', she immediately rejected the invitation although, three days later, she could 'think of nothing else; my mind is swarming with ideas for lectures' (*D*4, p. 79–80). Woolf's declared reasons for rejecting appear to be practical. Writing to Clive Bell, Woolf claimed that the 'honour is not overwhelming' and in her diary records the usual writer's panic at sudden writing requests: 'how could I write 6 lectures, to be delivered in full term, without giving up a year to criticism' (*L*5, p. 27; *D*4, p. 79).

Two days later 'the devil' is whispering that Woolf had already 'six lectures written in Phases of Fiction; & could furbish them up & deliver the Clark lectures, and win the esteem of my sex' (*D*4, p. 79). Woolf's 'devil' or mental 'disturbance' resembles Freud's understanding that 'the essence of success was to have got further than one's father . . . as though to excel one's father was still something forbidden' (Freud, 1960, p. 247). Precisely because giving the lectures would be an anti-patriarchal project, 'winning the esteem of my sex', Woolf, like Freud, cannot envisage accepting. Woolf's fear of surpassing the father is clear in her defence mechanisms. Undertaking the lectures would, Woolf claims, make her '2 or 3 years distant from The Waves' (*D*4, p. 80). The excess in Woolf's reaction betrays a defence mechanism. Woolf's writing timetable becomes a convenient screen on which to project her anxieties of surpassing Leslie Stephen.

By the end of the thirties, when Woolf was reading Freud and writing a "Sketch of the Past", she understood her relationship with her father in Freudian terms now using Freud's term ambivalence to describe her feelings about her father, but in 1932, the year of Woolf's visit to the Acropolis, Woolf famously claimed unfamiliarity with the works of Freud. Just before visiting Greece, writing to an American undergraduate, Woolf stated 'I have not read Dr Freud or any psychoanalyst – indeed I think I have never read any of their books; my knowledge is merely from superficial talk' (*L*5, p. 36). Returning from Greece, Woolf repeated her disclaimers in a further letter to the American 'I may say that I have never read Bergson and have only a very amateurish knowledge of Freud and the psychoanalysts; I have made no study of them' (*L*5, p. 91). But one of the three books published about Woolf in that year was *le roman psychologique de Virginia Woolf* by Floris Delattre and members of Woolf's family circle had great expertise in Freud's works and a lively awareness of the impact of psychology on popular culture – as had Woolf.

James Strachey and Adrian Stephen studied Freud professionally in the 1920s, and Lytton Strachey's biography of Elizabeth and Essex in 1928 was informed by interpretative psychology. The Stracheys went on to translate Freud's works for the Hogarth Press. Leonard, as early as 1914, had reviewed *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* for *The New Weekly* and read *The Interpretation of Dreams* (Kurzweil, 1983, p. 248). Virginia makes a direct reference to Freudianism in her 1920s review of J. D. Beresford's novel *An Imperfect Mother* which was entitled "Freudian Fiction" (in *CW*, pp. 152–4). And in *A Room of One's Own* (1928) she creates an imaginary 'psychopathology of everyday life' in her portrait of Professor von X (*AROO*, p. 31). Inevitably, by April 1932 when Virginia and Leonard together with the Frys left for Greece, Virginia would perceive her mnemonic memories of the past, which the Acropolis triggered, in a more complicated way than simply as nostalgia. Roger Fry himself was fascinated, as early as 1919, by the relationship between collecting objects and Freud's idea of anal complexes, and Fry's discussions with Woolf influenced Woolf's short story "Solid Objects"; as Benjamin Harvey explores in his chapter in this volume and in "Charles and John, or, On Letting Go and Holding On" (Harvey, 2004).

In Woolf's letters from Greece, and in the accompanying diaries, there are highly mediated interactions between her memories of 1906 and the present of 1932. Although in a two-line letter to Ottoline Morrell, Woolf, facetiously, says of Athens 'this is where we are, not much like Gower Street', her more autobiographical descriptions reveal complex mediations in which the past is not unproblematically screened off by

direct transference to present images but acts as an informing level of reality (*L*5, p. 60). For example Woolf largely repeats in her diary an entry she made in August 1906 describing the mind's ability to create visual images 'unasked' (Leaska, 1998, p. 328). Woolf reverts to displacement in a classic Freudian sense by screening her own responses onto those of Roger and Margery Fry. 'Roger is a fair shower bath of erudition – Not a flower escapes him. And if it did, Margery would catch it' (*L*5, p. 54). It is Fry who notices Woolf's ability to disassociate. 'Margery caught me smiling the other day at my own thoughts and said no Fry had ever done that. "No" said Roger, "we have no powers of disassociation"' (*L*5, p. 56).

What Woolf experiences is precisely what Freud, in his Acropolis letter, defines as his own 'derealization', a defence mechanism that, for Freud, was a defence against the guilt of surpassing his father (Freud, 1960, p. 244). Woolf frequently recalls the past in other forms of displacement. Returning to Athens from Corinth 'To Athens again . . . and I thought of the lights of the herring fleet at sea; everyone holding a yellow taper along the street and all the lights coming out in the windows' (*L*5, p. 59). Woolf's structure of feeling here is her childhood memories of St Ives which she recreated in *To the Lighthouse*. 'The lights were rippling and running . . . the lights of the town and of the harbour and the boats' (*TTL*, p. 68). In Greece, Woolf's memories and associations problematise her sense of personal history. Writing to Vita, Woolf thoughtfully describes a somatic contamination by the past. 'Yes it was so strange coming back here again I hardly knew where I was; or when it was. There was my own ghost coming down from the Acropolis, aged 23' (*L*5, p. 62).

In her 1932 diaries Woolf describes the Acropolis in artistic terms. 'My own ghost met me, the girl of 23, with all her life to come: that; & then, this is more compact & splendid & robust than I remembered. The yellow pillars – how shall I say? Gathered, grouped, radiating there on the rock' (*D*4, p. 90). What Woolf achieves in this passage is precisely her aim in 1906: 'it will be great fun to rush through Europe, and climb the Acropolis. I cant settle to read Greek history and Antiquities so I shall make the scenery – in fact the atmosphere and the colour my job' (*L*1, p. 235). Woolf's 1932 reconstitution of the Acropolis in representations of colour and shape enacts her aim of 1906. In a very general way, Woolf's Greek descriptions are anti-patriarchal. Greece offered Woolf an alternative to her father, to linear masculine history: 'This is England in the time of Chaucer' (*D*4, p. 92). Woolf prefers Greece, 'an uncivilised, hot new season to be brought into our lives . . . sloughing the

respectable skin' (*D*4, p. 97). Woolf enjoys recounting sexual memories in a letter to Vanessa that 'if ever I had the turn towards Sapphism it would be revived by the carts of young peasant women in lemon red & blue handkerchiefs' (*L*5, p. 57). Woolf realises that Greece has become as significant to her as the St Ives childhood: 'And I could love Greece, as an old woman, so I think, as I once loved Cornwall, as a child' (*D*4, p. 97). The impact of Greece on Woolf was immense: 'since we came back, I'm screwed up into a ball; cant get into step; cant make things dance; feel awefully detached; see youth; feel old; no, thats not quite it; wonder how a year or 20 perhaps is to be endured . . . the inane pointlessness of this existence' (*D*4, p. 102). Woolf's mind presents her, 'unasked, with visions, as I walk, of Aegina, of Athens – the Acropolis with the incandescent pillars . . . not yet complete enough for me to have detached pictures' (*D*4, p. 100). A recurrent trope in Woolf's modernist fiction, as it is in most modernist writing, is the image of a frame, calling attention to the process of meaning-making by highlighting bright, visual scenes in the surrounding narrative. Similarly, in the Woolfs' photographs framing is very carefully constructed. By 'disturbing' Woolf's ability to frame the visual, Greece inserts a more traumatic moment of iterative memories and unchained events.

The period is one in which Woolf was overwhelmed by unchained *dispotifs* of death; it was as well the time of her most active album construction. Photographic frames offer self-contained spaces, refuges from the affective contemporary deaths Woolf was witnessing (Humm, 2006). In March, Arnold Bennett died, making Woolf 'sadder than I should have supposed . . . an element in life – even in mine that was so remote – taken away. This is what one minds' (*D*4, pp. 15–16). In April Woolf praises Beatrice Webb's 'justification of suicide. Having made the attempt myself [in 1913], from the best of motives as I thought' (*L*4, p. 305). Returning to Tavistock Square and her diaries, Woolf decides that 'Percy [Woolf's gardener at Rodmell] could burn the lot in one bonfire. He could burn them at the edge of the field where, so we think, we shall lie buried' (*D*4, p. 24).

When Woolf's headaches returned in May, she realised that 'if it were not for the divine goodness of L. how many times I should be thinking of death' and memories of death inevitably recall Woolf's father (*D*4, p. 27). On the September 3 each year Woolf writes the same words in each diary 'the battle of Dunbar: the battle of Worcester . . .' because she remembers 'father saying that at St Ives on this day' (*D*4, p. 43). In the same month Woolf changes the location of her burial in a letter to John Lehmann, 'in 50 years I shall be under the pond with

the gold fish swimming over me' (*L*4, p. 381). Delighted by Vanessa's reaction to *The Waves* that the book was 'a lullaby capable of singing him [Thoby] to rest' Woolf replied that she had Thoby 'so much in my mind – I have a dumb rage still at his not being with us always' (*L*4, pp. 390–1).

Lytton Strachey's fatal illness in December depressed Woolf still further. 'Talk to L. last night about death: the stupidity; what he would feel if I died' (*D*4, p. 55). And 'L. & I sobbed on Christmas Eve' (*D*4, p. 56). Dining at the Keyneses on Christmas Day the couples talked about death and immortality. 'L. said death was stupid like a motor accident' but Maynard Keynes wished that 'there should be death arranged for couples simultaneously, like himself & Lydia, me & Leonard. But he always supposed he would die before Lydia, & I, I said, before Leonard. Then Lydia and Leonard will marry. They will combine all these dogs' (*D*4, p. 56).

It was photography that the Woolfs turned to in the last days of the year. Photography offered the Woolfs a form of oppositional memorialising. Taking photographs of friends and mounting photographs into repetitive sequences in photo albums function as a technology of memory, performing important memory work in constituting and consolidating friendships and familial identities (Hirsch, 1997). When the Keyneses came the next day to Monk's House for tea, the Woolfs took photographs that embed the Christmas Day discussion about couples and immortality. The presence of death is an informing referent in the sequencing of the photographs. Reinforcing the solidity of their friends by means of repetition is a form of narrative acting against the instabilities of death.

If, as Roland Barthes suggests, the photographic image records absence and presence simultaneously then to double up each photograph, as the Woolfs so frequently do, doubles the that-has-been essence of each photograph as if to defy time (Barthes, 1981). By photographing the Keyneses as quasi-formal images, partially replicating sitting positions with clear lighting and two frontal gazes, the Woolfs give the Keyneses a very strong presence and exaggerated significance. The photographs are like studio photographs in which the Keyneses are advertising or performing themselves. The portrait presences are full and unmistakeably self-confident, preserved by the Woolfs from oblivion. The photographs are agents of memory framing and linking the Keyneses and exaggerating the quality of coupledom. John Maynard Keynes and Virginia Woolf did die earlier than their respective partners (Keynes in 1946 and Woolf in 1941) but, of course, Lydia and Leonard did not marry.

In the first month of 1932 Woolf was again thinking about death. Writing to Ottoline Morrell, Woolf describes the characters in *The Waves* as 'ghosts' and remarks that 'real people have ghosts' (*L*5, p. 6). Lytton Strachey's death that month was 'like having the globe of the future perpetually smashed . . . a sense of something spent, gone: that is to me so intolerable . . . one knows now how irremediable' (*D*4, pp. 64–5). In a letter to Lytton's sister Pippa, Woolf places Lytton's death into a chain of deaths 'thinking of Lytton and Thoby and how Lytton came to me when Thoby died' (*L*5, p. 8). Again 'the loss of Lytton gets harder and harder to bear' (*L*5, p. 12). Lytton's death made Woolf think about her own. In February she records in her diary 'what is the point of – life . . . suddenly becomes thin, indifferent. Lytton is dead' (*D*4, p. 74). Lytton's death, at the early age of 52, shocked Woolf and she mourned and grieved for her friend. Again it is photography that reconstitutes the continuity of life for Woolf. Thanking Ottoline Morrell for sending photographs of Woolf and Lytton, Woolf declares 'I am very glad to have the photographs of Lytton – how exactly it brings him back! . . . I am aghast at the futility of life' (*L*5, p. 16). In a second letter to Morrell, Woolf rhapsodises 'how tremendously vivid Lytton becomes in them – one can hear him speak' (*L*5, p. 18). Woolf was delighted when Dora Carrington sent photographs: 'I loved those little pictures, darling Carrington. How it seizes upon one, the longing for Lytton, when one sees them' (*L*5, p. 28). Carrington's photographs are snapshots rather than the more formal portraits taken by the Woolfs. Snapshots reproduce the banality of a moment and also its irremediably experiential quality.

The Woolfs carefully placed Carrington's photographs into Monk's House Album 4, out of chronological sequence, making the memory of Lytton a vivid memento mori. Carrington committed suicide immediately after Lytton's death, and Woolf reflected how Carrington 'kept so much of Lytton that her death makes his loss more complete' (*L*5, p. 34). Writing to Ethel Smyth a few weeks later Woolf felt 'hemmed in and depressed and haunted by poor Carrington' (*L*5, p. 38). Woolf's diary entry describing her last visit to Carrington, the day before Carrington shot herself, is an unusually exhaustive account full of exact descriptions of the rooms and garden and each person's clothes, gestures and behaviour. Woolf's description, like a camera, controls appearances, denying death by means of precise narrative as if to frame the event.

The Woolfs visited Greece very shortly after the double deaths, and on their return, death was again very much on their minds: Katherine Furse's husband had died (*L*5, p. 73), and Goldie Dickinson (*D*4, p. 120).

Fainting at Rodmell, Woolf thinks 'a little of dying suddenly', but is able to recover because 'I am going in to be photographed' (*D*4, p. 121). The photographs that the Woolfs took of each other that day are double portraits in which each body has great presence. The photographs focus on the upper body and head giving maximum attention to the faces. Both Virginia and Leonard stare directly at the camera with a powerful gaze, and also off-frame as if in intelligent contemplation. The use of space gives each sitter a strong physicality like a double biography. But when another of Leonard's photographs of Virginia is used as the frontispiece of Winifred Holtby's study of Woolf, instead of the Lenare photograph that Virginia preferred, Woolf feels 'my privacy is invaded . . . ugliness revealed' and she dreams of death (*D*4, p. 124). The dream of death occurs because the photograph has been torn from its context – the photo album – and therefore from Woolf's meaning process. To prise the photograph from the context of the album is a violence, the death of the image's meaning. It is as if the transposition of the photograph into a meaning system uncongenial to Woolf (Woolf disparaged Holtby's book) unconsciously triggers traumatic dreams. In November, finishing her essay on Leslie Stephen for *The Times*, Woolf immediately suffers anxiety: 'I lay in bed reasoning that I could not come smash. Death I defy you &. But it was a terrific effort' (*D*4, p. 129).

The next year, 1933, John Galsworthy died, and so did Lady Cecil of whom Woolf writes to Ethel 'do you die as I do and lie in the grave and then rise and see people like ghosts? And all my friends are dead' (*L*5, p. 164). Disassociating, Woolf is 'amused to be dead – one of those ghosts that people talk of respectfully: rather a dignified position: you can't speak ill of the dead' (*L*5, p. 178). The portraits that the Woolfs took of Ethel carry mnemonic traces. Details such as the flower, chair and positions echo Woolf's favourite photograph, taken by Vanessa at St Ives in 1892, of Virginia together with her mother and father (Humm, 2002). Again the Woolfs allow Ethel to dominate the space of the photograph in a stylised series of positions. The room at Monk's House is a limited and personal geography giving Ethel a solid presence reinforced by the use of clear lighting, framing and repetition as in the Woolfs' other portraits.

Creating pictures, whether these are fictional or photographic, is Woolf's constant defence against the pain of death. On their subsequent Italian holiday, Woolf changes the place of her burial yet again to 'be buried, if bones can walk' at Monte Oliveto (*L*5, p. 185). The Italian journey was also a journey into Woolf's past as she remembers the holiday with Violet Dickinson in 1904 immediately after Leslie Stephen's death

(Lee 1996, p. 145). Staying in Lerici, Woolf sits 'by an open window, by a balcony, by the bay in which Shelley was drowned' and immediately fictionalises the scene in a visual frame: 'describe the hills, the tall pink yellow white house' (*L*5, p. 186). Returning through France and reading that Lady Cynthia Mosley has died, Woolf displaces the event visually: 'picture the scene; wonder at death' (*D*4, p. 160). There was always the danger that fiction would flood into life. When Woolf was writing *The Pargiters* she wrote in her diary: 'I have just killed Mrs P.' and found that 'these little scenes embroil one, just as in life' (*D*4, p. 173). *The Pargiters* was the history of Woolf's family and included memories of her childhood and life in London. Woolf originally planned to group the years in *The Pargiters* in sequences that would omit the years of key deaths (1906 – Thoby's death) and key photographs (the 1892 photograph) (Leaska, 1998, p. 337).

At the Rothschilds' engagement party in October 1933, Woolf experienced a dread of death: 'Candles were lit, and I chose mine, a green one, and it was the first to die which means . . . I shall be the first to wear a winding sheet' (*L*5, p. 241). But it was the successive deaths of friends that Woolf found more traumatic. Walking through Leicester Square, Woolf read of the 'Death of noted novelist' – Stella Benson – who had 'sat on the terrace with me at Rodmell . . . how mournful the afternoon seems . . . there seems to be some sort of reproach to me in her death . . . why not my name on the posters?' (*D*4, p. 192). Woolf placed Benson's photograph in Monk's House Album 3 in 1932. What is at stake in all of these observations of Woolf is that photographs and fictional scenes become object-cathexes of Woolf's instinctual turn to death. As Freud argues, these object-cathexes are 'self-preservative' (Freud, 1960, p. 97). Reading the Book of Job in October may also have helped Woolf to turn from the symbolic father. God's patriarchal project to humble the patriarch Job is a grandiose fable of the horrors of masculinity (even if Job lives to be a hundred and forty).

The year 1934 began with the death of Leonard's sister Clara, and George Duckworth's death, following Woolf's completion of the sexual molestation scene in *The Pargiters*. This was accompanied by Woolf's 'usual incongruous shades of feeling' (*D*4, p. 211). But the most traumatic death of all was the unexpected death of Roger Fry in September, making the substance go out of everything (*D*4, p. 242). Fry's death immediately reminds Woolf of her mother's death. 'I remember turning aside at mother's bed . . . she's pretending, I said: aged 13' (*D*4, p. 242). At Fry's funeral in Golder's Green Crematorium Woolf 'laid my hand on' Desmond MacCarthy's shoulder '& said dont die yet . . . nor you either he said' (*D*4, p. 243). Fry's funeral brought 'a fear of death' and Woolf

writes 'do you find that is one of the effects of a shock – that pictures come up and up and up, without bidding or much control? I could almost see Roger' (*L*5, p. 334). Visualisations, and her writing mood, gave Woolf 'the exalted sense of being above time & death' (*D*4, p. 248). Like her letters from the Acropolis, Woolf's letters about Fry's death replicate the emotional tone she adopted when writing about her father's death in 1904 (Leaska, 1998, p. 359).

Ann and Judith Stephen came to stay with the Woolfs in Rodmell that month and Woolf can immediately 'see this through Roger's eyes' (*D*4, p. 244). Photographing the Stephen sisters, the Woolfs make use of the same portraiture dynamic. Again there is an extreme close-up gaze and clear lighting and each sitter has a very strong presence. The photographs witness the stability of each sitter. They are highly intentional, carefully framed portraits in which the girls have an omniscient authority, engaging directly with the camera. The Woolfs displace the gap between themselves and sitters by a marked lack of foreground space. There is no caesura between photographer and subject. The photographs create a sense of agency and corporeality in the context of Fry's recent death. Woolf's last diary entry for 1934 is a visual scene of death. 'One's own death – think of lying there alone, looking at it . . . And Roger dead' (*D*4, p. 267).

It is relevant that Woolf's great aunt, the Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, like Woolf, suffered from mood swings typified by bipolar personality traits. In a fascinating account of Cameron's photographs and 'eccentricity', Kirsten Hoving argues that Cameron's photographs of women (but not of men) are of depressive women, as if Cameron were constructing a 'kind of pre-Freudian typological approach to reflect despair' as a kind of vehicle for expressing her own states of mind (Hoving, 2003, p. 53). But although Cameron shared Woolf's sometimes manic behaviours – for example, for Cameron 'letter-writing may also have been a form of manic activity', with letters compounded, like Woolf's, by numerous ampersands – Woolf's women are not depressive female images (Hoving, 2003, p. 49). According to Hoving, Cameron photographs women sitters without perspective or three-dimensional space, as if the external world is dark and blank. The Woolfs' photographs, on the other hand, place women sitters close to the camera in strong poses and full light including sharp details of background objects.

The affective relations between the Woolfs' photographs, visual memories and multiple experiences of death, whether real or imagined, in the early 1930s, are an important feature of Virginia Woolf's life and

work. The Woolfs used photographs as a route into these nondepictable relations, creating images of friends almost as a mnenomic device, a scaffolding against the void. Family photographs are semiotic and personal objects in that they contain signifiers representing absent and present emotions, and personal in that subjects share a conversational past. At a general level, the Woolfs' photographs engage in the process of *deixis* that psychologists active in photoanalysis describe as a 'conversational remembering with photographs' (Edwards and Middleton, 1988, p. 9). Photoanalysis is a method of using photography to increase self-awareness in groups or individuals (Anderson and Malloy, 1976, p. 261). For example, photoanalysts who analyse conversations between mothers and children that were triggered by photographs find mediated memories. Mothers reconstruct the past in photographic *deixis* in order to explain the past to themselves and to their children. Photographs can act as mediators of access to their past and also as a protective scaffolding for the creation of a new present (Edwards and Middleton 1988). These visual reminiscences free neurotics from depression.

The Woolfs' photographs are ambient props against the social and personal instabilities of the thirties. Woolf progressively displaces her instinctual fears of death and fears of the symbolic father by what Freud termed the 'aesthetic ideal', the continual creation of visual scenes (Freud, 1960, p. 214). The early 1930s were years of instability and death, but 1934 ended with a positive view: 'My Lodge is demolished; the new house in process of building in the orchard. There will be open doors in front; & a view right over to Caburn', and Woolf looked forward to 'a show of Man Ray photographs in Bedford Sq . . . Man Ray says will I come & be photographed – on Tuesday 3.30' (*D*4, pp. 263–4), for what has become the iconic Woolf photograph.

9

Woolf, Fry and the Psycho-Aesthetics of Solidity

Benjamin Harvey

> I looked in at the Nat Gall [. . .]. I looked at Renoir, Cézanne &c: tried to see through Roger's eyes: tried to get some solidity into my mind. So to lunch.
>
> (Virginia Woolf, *Diary*, 28 September 1938)

I begin this chapter with two passages from Virginia Woolf's novels of the 1920s, which both feature characters contemplating the question of painting's progress and feature a crucial if ambiguous word: 'solid'. I shall suggest that this was a crucial term in Bloomsbury's aesthetic vocabulary. The first passage is taken from *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and occurs early in "The Window" section, during the 'dull errand' Mrs. Ramsey takes in the company of Charles Tansley. Mrs. Ramsey has paused to enjoy the view of the bay and the lighthouse. It is a scene ripe to be turned into a landscape:

> But now, she said, artists had come here. There indeed, only a few paces off, stood one of them [. . .]. Since Mr. Paunceforte had been there, three years before, all the pictures were like that she said, green and grey, with lemon-coloured sailing-boats, and pink women on the beach.
>
> But her grandmother's friends, she said, glancing discreetly as they passed, took the greatest pains; first they mixed their own colours, and then they ground them, and then they put damp cloths on them to keep them moist.
>
> So Mr. Tansley supposed she meant him to see that that man's picture was skimpy, was that what one said? The colours weren't solid? Was that what one said? (*TTL*, p. 13)

Mrs. Ramsay laments a change that distinguishes the modern artist from that of her grandmother's friends. Their painstaking approach has been

replaced by what she takes to be an easier one, the more vaporous *plein air* style that she sees in front of her. Here, presumably, is a painter who dips his brushes in mass-produced pigments, conveniently expressed from the tube. Although the fictional Mr. Paunceforte inaugurated this latter approach, Woolf's description of his art succinctly evokes the anglicised brand of Impressionism associated with the influential New English Art Club and, particularly, with the art of one of its founding members, Wilson Steer. Painting has somehow lost its solidity, has become disappointingly 'skimpy'. Importantly, these words follow a shift in point-of-view from Mrs. Ramsay to the younger Charles Tansley, whose repeated query – 'Was that what one said?' – responds to his sense of his companion's expectations and his shaky grasp of *current* art-speak. A change in painting style and technique is, then, paralleled by the characters' diverging approaches to the business of articulating this change.

The second passage comes from chapter eleven of *Jacob's Room* (1922) and is set in an artistic centre rather than a provincial periphery. Sojourning in Paris, Jacob is spending time with his friend Cruttendon. It is Sunday, around eleven o'clock in the morning, 'the scene a studio':

> "That's a solid piece of work", said Jacob, standing a canvas on a chair.
>
> "Oh, that I did ages ago", said Cruttendon, looking over his shoulder.
>
> "You're a pretty competent painter in my opinion", said Jacob after a time.
>
> "Now if you'd like to see what I'm after at the present moment", said Cruttendon, putting a canvas before Jacob. "There. That's it. That's more like it. That's . . . " he squirmed his thumb in a circle round a lamp globe painted white.
>
> "A pretty solid piece of work", said Jacob, straddling his legs in front of it. (*JR*, p. 127)

Words fail painter and critic alike. While Cruttendon eventually resorts to a circular gesture to reiterate the form of his painting, Jacob's straddling stance suggests, equally, a comically masculine address and critical equivocation. His comment about the second 'pretty solid piece of work' may be appropriate and may accord with its geometric, monochromatic subject matter. But since Jacob merely reiterates his response to the first painting, unlike Charles and Mrs. Ramsay, he fails to register any difference between paintings, between the work painted 'ages ago' and that of 'the present moment'. 'Solid' is a vaguely positive, ultimately

non-committal response, a convenient word to reach for as Jacob endures what Woolf elsewhere calls 'the most exquisite of tortures – to be made to look at pictures with a painter' (*TM*, p. 178). She was writing from experience. A journal entry suggests a possible source for the passages. 'I feel little hope about his pictures', Woolf wrote, having spent a weekend with Roger Fry, 'but had to counterfeit an opinion as to the effect produced on the solidity of a bowl by a mornings work on it' (*D*1, p. 227). From this, it sounds as though it was Fry who broached the sensitive issue of his bowl's solidity and, further, that otherwise this question would not have occurred to Woolf.

Read together, these passages help us to identify a number of issues that concerned Woolf and Bloomsbury: the assimilation of aesthetic ideas associated with France, the dialogic and social nature of art criticism and of 'the artist's critique', the mismatch between art and language, the perception and description of artistic change, and – in relationship to this language and this change – the emergence of 'solid' as a useful, if problematic, term. We have read a lot about the phrase 'significant form', and may be familiar with the kind of formalist language Roger Fry and Clive Bell popularised in their art criticism, with "Vision, Volumes and Recession", as Walter Sickert titled his caricature of Fry. But what about this matter of 'solid' art and what about the quality of 'solidity' in general? Once noticed, the words can be found peppering Woolf's writing in a bewildering range of contexts. In this chapter, I shall suggest that art theory, and particularly Roger Fry's work on Paul Cézanne, provides one likely reason for this profusion; that the entrance of one of Cézanne's paintings into Bloomsbury helped to connect solidity to the figure of the collector. And, further, that some of Woolf's texts – notably the short story "Solid Objects" (1920) and *Roger Fry: A Biography* (1940) – address the psychoanalytic and affective aspects of the collected object. The truly solid object, it turns out, is an object that endures, an object that one cannot quite do without, and an object to which it is worth returning.

What might this solidity be? Roger Fry's use of the word emerged out of the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition (1910–11), where he used it to distinguish between "Manet and the Post-Impressionists". Comparing Manet's *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* with a *Mme Cézanne*, Fry would claim that the 'Cézanne's portrait arouses in my imagination the idea of reality, of solidity, mass and resistance, in a way which is altogether wanting in Manet's picture' (Fry, 1996, p. 106). Underpinning such remarks is Cézanne's famous declaration of artistic intent, as recorded by Maurice Denis and given here in Fry's translation of 1910: 'What I wanted was to make of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the

art of the museums' (Bullen, 1988, p. 66). In both Fry and Cézanne's formulations, solidity is allied with a sense of substance or weightiness: a solid, after all, is an object with no internal cavity. Solidity here surely also relates to a painting's compositional or structural features – its internal organisation – and thus carries the additional connotations of coherency and logical necessity. Something that is both substantial and well-constructed might reasonably be expected to last or endure, and it comes as no surprise to find the artist and critic invoking solidity as part of a larger claim for Cézanne's canonicity.

Further aspects of this solidity can be found when interrogating Cézanne's painted *Apples*. The volumetric apples might, for example, remind us that solids are specifically three-dimensional, geometric figures, such as those mentioned by Cézanne in his oft-repeated comment to Emile Bernard: 'treat nature by means of the cylinder, the sphere, the cone . . . ' (Cézanne, 1995, p. 301). Aside from solidity of form, there is also solidity of texture, and in his *Apples*, Cézanne painted the fruit and their backdrop with his so-called constructive stroke, his diagonally aligned hatches of pigment, which systematically fill almost the entire oblong of the canvas. The surface is solid not only in the sense of having an assertive physical presence – thickly rather than thinly painted – but also in that of being continuous or uninterrupted.

Cézanne's *Apples* entered Bloomsbury in the spring of 1918, when John Maynard Keynes, acting on a tip from Fry, bought them at the Parisian sale of Degas' collection. Then working for the treasury, Keynes had persuaded the British Government to give Sir Charles Holmes, the director of the National Gallery, £21,000 to spend at the sale on behalf of the nation. Although Holmes ended up being (in Fry's words) 'pig-headed about Cézanne' (Fry, 1972, p. 426), this cleared the way for Keynes to purchase the *Apples* for himself and on behalf of his Bloomsbury colleagues. 'The Cézanne is amazing', Vanessa Bell told Fry, writing from Charleston, 'and it's most exciting to have it in the house. It's so extraordinarily alive and solid. It's the little one of 7 apples that we liked so much, very small indeed' (Bell, 1998, p. 213). By the middle of April, 1918, the work had moved to Keynes' house in Gordon Square, and Woolf went with Roger Fry to see it:

> There are 6 apples in the Cézanne picture. What can 6 apples *not* be? I began to wonder. Theres their relationship to each other, & their colour, & their solidity. To Roger & Nessa, moreover, it was a far more intricate question than this. It was a question of pure or mixed; if pure which colour: emerald or viridian; & then the laying on of the

> paint; & the time he'd spent, & how he'd altered it, & why, & when he'd painted it – We carried it into the next room, & Lord! how it showed up the pictures there, as if you put a real stone among sham ones; the canvas of the others seemed scraped with a thin layer of rather cheap paint. The apples positively got redder & rounder & greener. I suspect some very mysterious quality of potation in that picture. (*D*1, pp. 140–1)

Woolf's response to the painting incorporates a wide range of responses to the work from her philosophically open-ended question – 'What can 6 apples *not* be?' – to the more technical questions pursued by 'Roger & Nessa'. The 'question of pure paint or mixed', for example, might pertain to the fact that two different modelling systems operate in the work. Sometimes different hues are placed directly next to one another (this is the matter of pure paint); at other times these hues are mixed with white and black in order to move from highlights to cast shadows (this the matter of mixed). The systems work in tandem, each contributing to our perception of the apples' volumetric qualities, to their solidity.

Although Woolf does not specifically say so, the painting may well have been taken into the 'next room' precisely in order to bring it into dialogue with other works. A comparative test, at any rate, serves to heighten Woolf's sense of the work's solidity, the 'pictures there' seeming thin in comparison to the *Apples*, which become 'redder & rounder & greener'. It is the genuine article, 'a real stone' among shams. Habitually likened to jewels and gems, diamonds and pearls, the comment seems conventional enough, but fits nicely with Cézanne's constructive strokes, which are like a jewel's facets and which, as Lacan observed, 'fall like rain' (Lacan, 1982, p. 110).

A sense of solidity can, then, be established by attending to an object's internal features or by considering it within its larger context. It is not just a property of an object, but something the object 'arouses in imagination'. It follows that the object can, under observation, fluctuate between the realms of the solid and the non-solid (the liquid, the airy or gaseous), in such a way as to heighten our sense of the mutual relationship between the two. If the solid can turn into air, then so too can the airy become solid again. We might think of the physical sciences, of how crystals are formed from liquids, to use an analogy Fry favoured. Or we might think of the process of freezing and liquefying; the painting is caught between liquid and solid states. Formed from hardened paint, as the *Apples* become more solid they also become more liquid. Until, like cider, they have gained a 'mysterious quality of potation'.

There is an obvious paradox to the semantics of solidity: the more one thinks about it, the less solid (reliable, constant) the word becomes. Perhaps it was this very mutability that helped make the word popular in the vocabulary of formalist art criticism and in relationship to Cézanne's art. In a 1951 essay, Clement Greenberg drew attention to this problem when he wrote that 'Cézanne got the "solidity" he was after all right, but it is as much a two-dimensional, literal solidity as a representational one' (Greenberg, 1986, p. 54). Greenberg's scare-quotes indicate his awareness that he is trying to revise something of a critical cliché and Fry had certainly contributed to the situation. In 1912, when D. S. MacColl took issue with Fry's comparison between Manet and Cézanne, he quibbled with Fry's tendency to find 'this magic of solidity in the most unlikely features' (Bullen, 1988, p. 278). It was, though, just too magical a word for Fry to abandon. In *Characteristics of French Art* (1932), for instance, he used the word, or one of its derivatives, no fewer than five times in his six-paragraph essay on Cézanne, generally in relationship to representational solidity or 'solid pictorial construction' (Fry, 1933, pp. 144–6).

In the 1920s, then, Woolf chose the word carefully as she penned her passages concerning the process of critiquing paintings. Jacob knows that Cruttendon, as an ambitious young painter, naturally wants his painting to be solid; Charles Tansley grasps that an absence of solidity would signal a painting's deficiency. And just as Cézanne's solidity was perceived in relationship to other art (Impressionism, Manet, the works already hanging in Gordon Square), so Lily Briscoe's distinctive aesthetic goals will be articulated in relationship to Paunceforte's example. She strives for a type of solidity that is at once compositional and coloristic:

> She could have done it differently of course; the colour could have been thinned and faded; the shapes etherealised; that was how Paunceforte would have seen it. But then she did not see it like that. She saw the colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral. (*TTL*, p. 48)

Lily toughens-up and thickens-up Paunceforte's skimpy art. She adds an armature to his formlessness and intensifies his ethereal colours.

Woolf's most concentrated exploration of solidity occurs, as the story's title might suggest, in "Solid Objects", which was published in *The Athenaeum* on 22 October 1920. The aspect of the word Woolf pursues hardest in the short story is the implication that, like Cézanne's 'art of the museums', the solid object is also a durable object and, as a corollary,

a collectible one. The story tells of a politician, John, who, while walking on a beach, finds an object buried in the sand. This moment of serendipity changes the course of his life; he begins to lose interest in politics and starts an alternative vocation as a collector. Eventually, collecting totally eclipses the humans in his life, most notably his friend, Charles, who was with him during the initial discovery scene. (And let us note, in passing, how the names of Woolf's characters repeat those of the collectors at the Degas Sale: John Maynard Keynes and Sir Charles Holmes.)

The plural in the title of "Solid Objects" may, then, refer to the multiple objects John will eventually collect or, equally plausibly, to different types of solid object, to the existence of human objects as well as inanimate ones. Woolf succinctly states just such a possibility in her image of John handling his inaugural discovery, while (again) providing us with a contextual understanding of what a solid object might be:

> he held it to the light; he held it so that its irregular mass blotted out the body and extended right arm of his friend. The green thinned and thickened slightly as it was held against the sky or against the body. It pleased him; it puzzled him; it was so hard, so concentrated, so definite an object compared with the vague sea and the hazy shore. (*CSF*, p. 103)

Beyond suggesting that the collected object might substitute for a human, "Solid Objects" elaborates upon this possibility by relating aesthetic experience to the processes and pleasures of the human body. This, indeed, is a theme that we can already detect in Woolf's descriptions of Cézanne's *Apples*. The painting's subject matter, of course, appeals to a literal sense of consumption; additionally, as an intense visual object, we might metaphorically drink it up, responding to 'some very mysterious quality of potation in that picture'. The canvas, Woolf told Nicholas Bagenal in April 1918, was contained in a 'parcel about the size of a large slab of chocolate' and, looking at it, Fry created 'a sight of intoxication. He was like a bee on a sunflower' (*L2*, p. 230). These various themes – the figure of the collector, the substitution of different types of objects, and the relationship between aesthetic experience and bodily appetites – suggest a possible way of reading the short story.

Psychoanalytic theory posits the idea that the collector is typically an anal-erotic type, that the impulse to collect might have earthy origins. Though this might seem like a cliché to us now, it struck Roger Fry as an appealingly novel and outrageous theory when he encountered it in the 'revised and extended' edition of Ernest Jones' *Papers on*

Psycho-Analysis (1919). It was just the type of idea, in short, that begged to be shared with his Bloomsbury colleagues. Fry read Jones' book in March 1919, and fixed his attention on the last pages of the text, the chapter on "Anal-Erotic Character Traits", which he mentioned in two letters to Vanessa Bell. In the first, he notes that '[n]early everything from painting to book collecting is explained as a mere outcome of anal-eroticism'. '[A]nal-erotic complexes', he expands in the second, 'appear to account for everything one does or doesn't do. But it's a fine corrective to nobility and edification to realize that our spiritual nature is built upon dung' (Fry, 1972, pp. 448, 449). In this second letter, Fry added an asterisk by the word 'anal-erotic', which led to a marginal comment: 'Will you know what anal is? Virginia is anal; you're erotic'.

As Patricia Reid Broughton has argued, Woolf would certainly have encountered this remark in the late thirties, when she read her sister's correspondence with Fry. But this still leaves the possibility that he may have discussed Jones' ideas with Woolf when he first encountered them in 1919, during a period when their conversations could leave Woolf's lips 'sore with talk' (*D*1, p. 227). If, prior to 1939, Woolf's knowledge of Freud was derived 'merely from superficial talk' (*L*5, p. 36), we should add that such conversation formed the intellectual lifeblood of Bloomsbury. Intrigued, amused, sceptical and occasionally hostile, Fry and Woolf shared a similar range of responses to 'our dear Doctor Freud', as Fry once called him (Fry, 1972, p. 697). Unlike some of their Bloomsbury associates, they were neither practicing psychoanalysts, nor immediately involved in translating its literature, but, benefiting from this proximity, developed their own critical and creative engagement with it. Because Fry's own interest in psychoanalysis has been understated, or even brushed aside, so has his importance as someone who would have shared and discussed psychoanalytic ideas with Woolf, especially those ideas pertaining to culture and creativity.

"Solid Objects" contains ideas and images that are startling similar to those outlined by Jones – similar enough to suggest a second-hand familiarity with them. Woolf had shared her first thoughts for the story with Vanessa Bell in 1918 (*L*2, p. 299), but presumably wrote most of it about, or after, the time Fry was thinking about Jones' ideas and writing his own paired essays on collecting, "The Ottoman and the Whatnot" and "The Artist's Vision", which appeared in *The Athenaeum* in 1919. The topic of the anal-erotic character, moreover, was perfectly in accord with the tenor of Fry and Woolf's early correspondence.

Woolf's first surviving letter to Fry, of August 1911, contains as a postscript a humorous allusion to the euphemistic language used to

describe toilet habits. 'I must get my urinal', she wrote. '"A Venetian flower pot" I shall call it, to the chaste' (*L*1, p. 474). Fry seems to have provided her with the object, for a few weeks later she wrote to thank him for 'the exquisite Pot which arrived without a flaw. It is now my chief ornament, and I think it will be the instrument of much good, breaking down barriers, introducing the topics most worth discussing, etc.' (*L*1, pp. 476–7). Making a talking point of her silent pot, Woolf participates in the modernist desire to address hitherto ignored or censored subject matter. A prime example is provided by Leopold Bloom's visit to his outhouse in Joyce's *Ulysses*, which Woolf mentions in a letter to Fry: 'I don't know that he's got anything very interesting to say, and after all the p——ing of a dog isn't very different from the p——ing of a man. Three hundred pages of it might be boring' (*L*2, p. 234). Thus there were limits even to Woolf's interest in the subject and she objects to the length and directness of Joyce's desublimations. Even if the production of waste connects man to dog, is there not something to be said for its more oblique passage into culture, which might allow, say, a 'Venetian flower pot' to emerge out of a urinal?

Woolf and Fry's correspondence of 1919 – immediately following Fry's exposure to Jones' book – indicates no slackening of interest in such subjects. In May 1919, we find Fry imagining that Woolf will die with envy upon learning of his new house's 'Victorian W.C. WITH A PULL UP PLUG'. As though to compensate for its lack of a 'sham Chinese landscape in the pan', Fry adorned his note with a sketch of the toilet in question (Fry, 1972, p. 451). And in what was probably Woolf's next letter, she continues this theme by revealing a desire to spy on a 'grand scene of reconciliation' between Fry and Lady Ottoline Morrell: 'if you'd arrange it so that I could attend, behind a curtain or in a chamber pot – I'd have no objection whatever' (*L*2, p. 371). Whereas Fry pictured art in his W.C., the 'anal' Virginia goes further and places herself in a more rudimentary receptacle.

Eager to share Jones' ideas, Fry would have readily identified Woolf as an appreciative recipient. Jones' "Anal-Erotic Character Traits" begins with a summary of the evolving discourse on the subject; he mentions Freud's triad of anal character traits and reiterates the premise that 'certain traits of character may become profoundly modified as the result of sexual excitations experienced by the infant in the region of the anal canal' (Jones, 1919, pp. 664–5). The essay concerns itself with dividing anal-erotic characters into two categories: those who 'give out' and those who 'keep back' the object (Jones, 1919, p. 680). 'One can separate', argues Jones, 'the interest (and the character traits resulting therefrom)

taken in the act itself of defecation from that taken in the product of this act' (Jones, 1919, p. 666). Fixation on the process results in such traits as obstinacy and the tendency to procrastinate, as well as artistic creativity – the desire to stain, mark, mould or emit (Jones, 1919, pp. 683–5). Fixation on the product, by contrast, results in pedantry, orderliness, miserliness and retentiveness towards objects, especially when the object is a 'copro-symbol' (Jones, 1919, pp. 680–1). Thus 'the fond care that may lavished on a given collection – a trait of obvious value in the custodians of museums and libraries, etc. – [is] one of the most impressive traits in the whole gamut of the anal character' (Jones, 1919, pp. 681–2).

The psycho-aesthetics of sublimated waste are never far from the surface of "Solid Objects". After John has discovered his inaugural object, this stone is, as we have seen, opposed to Charles' body, and especially to his right hand, which has been occupied in playing ducks-and-drakes, in letting go of stones. In Jones' terms, if John is notably retentive, then Charles is his process-oriented foil. He bathes stones in the sea or, later, drops John's objects down on his mantelpiece to punctuate a point (*CSF*, p. 106). That is, rather than enjoying the stones for their own sake, he either distances himself from them (cleansing them in the process) or uses them instrumentally. In contrast, John will hold on to his stone and place it on his mantelpiece, where it will be joined by similar objects. 'He took', writes Woolf, 'to keeping his eyes upon the ground, especially in the neighbourhood of waste land where the household refuse is thrown away' (*CSF*, p. 104). Equipped with bag and stick, like a rag-picker, John 'ransacked all deposits of earth; raked beneath matted tangles of scrub; searched all spaces between walls' (*CSF*, p. 106).

Within this suggestive terrain, John's objects are both solid and soiled. Marked by their discovery on or under the earth, they recall these origins, even after their domestic enshrinement. Teasing out a relationship between the selection and election of objects, Woolf makes it clear that John's aesthetic and political 'platforms' are at odds: 'his constituents when they visited him were unfavourably impressed by the appearance of his mantelpiece' (*CSF*, p. 105). John's strangely repellent objects are, of course, never explicitly identified as faecal and elude any simple act of categorisation. Despite the precise descriptive language Woolf lavishes on them, they frustrate our capacity to imagine them. However solid they are, they melt in the mind. '[A]ny object', we read, 'mixes itself so profoundly with the stuff of thought that it loses its actual form and recomposes itself a little differently in an ideal shape which haunts the brain when we least expect it' (*CSF*, p. 104). Avoiding Freudian symbolism's reductive tendencies, Woolf nevertheless strongly implies a connection

between the collected objects and the processes of eating and excreting. Reading three of the story's episodes in the manner of John, with our eyes trained 'upon the ground', should cement this point.

First, there is the initial discovery scene, where John's burrowing in the sand is described in language that parallels Ernest Jones' comments about the collector's 'joy in finding or picking up objects . . . and the interest in the discovery of treasure trove'. Jones writes:

> The Treasure trove is usually buried underground, which connects with the interest . . . in concealed passages, caves, and the like; the interest is also evidently strengthened by other sexual components, *Schaulust* (visual sexual curiosity), incestuous exploration in the body of Mother Earth, etc. (Jones, 1919, p. 681)

Woolf, too, presents John's activity as a form of infantile regression and likens it to the discovery of treasure. His eyes expressed, she writes:

> nothing but wonder, which the eyes of young children display. [. . .] He remembered that, after digging for a little, the water oozes round your finger-tips; the hole then becomes a moat; a well; a spring; a secret channel to the sea. As he was choosing which of these things to make it, still working his fingers in the water, they curled round something hard – a full drop of solid matter – and gradually dislodged a large irregular lump, and brought it to the surface. (*CSF*, p. 103)

Next there is the choice John faces once he has uncovered this miraculous piece of 'solid matter' and brought it to sight – whether to let go or hold on to it. This dilemma presents itself immediately after Charles and John sit down to lunch on sandwiches: 'When they had done, and were shaking themselves and rising to their feet, John took the lump of glass and looked at it in silence. Charles looked at it too. But he saw immediately that it was not flat' (*CSF*, p. 103). John then pockets his find, but this passage does more than merely reiterate the characters' contrasting attitudes towards the object. With this being done, this rising up, this inspection of a lump, the picnic's end resembles the conclusion of an act of defecation. In a kind of accelerated causal chain, the *sand*wiches relate to the lump as sand relates to glass, or as food to excrement. Food, Jones argues, is the 'most natural' of the copro-symbols, 'this being the same substance in an earlier stage' (Jones, 1919, p. 676). Woolf carefully constructs a moment of ambiguity here, making us wonder whether the found lump is actually man-made.

If the prior episodes imply that John's inaugural discovery is a form of self-discovery, the third marks him as a connoisseur of other people's waste. Woolf provides us with a witty account of John's search for a perfectly broken piece of china. The narrator laments that:

> china is seldom thrown from a great height; it is one of the rarest of human actions. You have to find in conjunction a very high house, and a woman of such reckless impulse and passionate prejudice that she flings her jar or pot straight from the window without thought of who is below. (*CSF*, p. 105)

Compared to other items of china that might equally be thrown, say a plate or a cup, jars and pots have obvious lavatorial connotations, which can be fleshed out by mentioning the phrases 'slop jar' and 'chamber pot'. This encourages one to imagine that the irate woman might be emptying the contents of her jar or pot onto the street, in the age-old custom, rather than simply throwing the receptacles away. As Woolf and Fry's letters demonstrate, much scatological humour depends on the metonym that connects containers of waste to the waste contained, and Woolf humorously conjures up the possibility that a passerby, John for example, might find himself bemired. An ironic side-effect of John's collecting is that he helps to clean the streets, participating in what Dominique Laporte calls the 'alchemy' of waste.

Textual economy itself is implicated both in Woolf's exploration of collecting and in Jones' ideas. When Fry commented to Bell that Jones attempted to explain '[n]early everything from painting to book collecting', he maintained the distinction between letting go and holding on to materials; but 'writing' could easily have replaced 'painting' in Fry's formulation, both as another manifestation of the desire to stain, mark, mould or emit, and as the perfect partner to 'book collecting'. Fry acknowledged as much in a later communication to Lytton Strachey, his only other surviving reference to Jones' theory. Strachey had offered to give Fry an edition of Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*, but was answered with this stinging comment:

> I am very much pleased at your thinking of me, but I'm too overcrowded in this house to be able to keep such a mass of incontinent verbiage. [. . .] for now it seems to me to be the maundering of a very foolish man who was too lazy to think and too credulous to doubt the value of his mental overflow – rather like those Freudian children who preserve their excreta. (Fry, 1972, p. 600)

Collapsing Jones' two categories, Fry turns Ruskin – another John who collected stones – into a kind of case-study of anality-run-amuck, into someone who over-collects his own over-production. Simultaneously, he guards himself against similar accusations by refusing to be turned into a collector of Ruskin's *Stones*, telling Strachey: 'So I think you'd better keep the stones'.

A more subtle act of distancing can also be sensed in "Solid Objects". At the story's beginning, Woolf's narrator detects the shape of her characters as 'one small black spot' who are seen 'in outline against the sand' (*CSF*, p. 102). That is, Charles and John are identified in much the same way as John will identify one of his finds, and also share some of the same properties ('so solid, so living, so hard'). Although this narrative object appears unified, it quickly splits into two arguing individuals, and the story will end when Charles visits John's house and decides to leave John 'for ever'. He leaves John alone with his collection of objects, largely oblivious to the fact that he has been replaced in John's life by these objects, these '[p]retty stones' (*CSF*, p. 107). Woolf's dropping of the story coincides with Charles' dropping of John, and she participates in the same holding-on/letting-go predicament that she articulates through her characters. Our initial sympathy for John is eventually undercut when we increasingly wonder whether Charles' disgust and flight might be justified.

In contrast to Joyce and Ruskin, Woolf demonstrates a careful propriety in the way she collects and manages her own short text. Virginia might indeed be anal, but not *that* anal. Unlike Joyce, Woolf carefully relegates her anal imagery to the level of a strong subtext. Bloomsbury's much vaunted frankness was, after all, most apparent in their letters and private conversations. It was in a play performed and enjoyed by friends and family that Woolf joked about the lavatorial connotations of Bloomsbury's post code, contrasting the murkiness of *WC*1 to the Isle of Wight's *Freshwater* (*FW*, pp. 47–8). In their publications, such risqué subjects were more likely to be hinted at than explicitly addressed. Consider, to take another example, Woolf's mischievous reference to Freud in her 1920 review of E. M. M. Young's play, *The Higher Court*. 'Dr. Freud', she writes, 'may well have discovered something entirely new and completely devastating about children's toys. What, when you come to think of it, is a Teddy Bear?' (*E*3, p. 207). Left hanging, we might nevertheless guess that Jones' theories would have run through Roger Fry's mind, if and when he came to think about it.

The young Fry, according to Woolf's biography, was more inclined to bond to other types of objects. He 'went up to bed', she writes, 'not with a toy, but with a crystal that his grandmother gave him' (*RF*, p. 26). Later, he

would curate and collect, although he would never actually buy a Cézanne, the artist whose solidity he felt most certain about – the artist with whom he was, and remains, most closely identified. But collecting need not be limited to the literal sense of amassing objects, and Fry's attempts to track down original Cézannes might certainly count as collecting in a broader sense. Aspects of these experiences were preserved in the art works he made after Cézanne, in his critical prose, and in *Cézanne*: *A Study of His Development* (1927), his monograph on the artist. Based largely on Auguste Pellerin's collection, and sporting on its cover Fry's lithographic copy of a Cézanne still-life, the book now reads like a kind of *musée imaginaire*, one devoted to commemorating its author's relationship to Cézanne's art. When she was faced with the task of writing Fry's biography, Woolf would reflect on her 'odd posthumous friendship' with her subject, and the phrase might equally serve as an apt description of Fry's relationship with Cézanne. Just such a parallel would have been evident to Woolf as she worked on the biography and, in the completed work, she one-ups her subject by claiming that the 'critic of Roger Fry as a man has a far harder task than any that was set him by the pictures of Cézanne' (*RF*, p. 294).

To conclude this discussion of psycho-aesthetics of solidity in Bloomsbury, I briefly examine how Woolf's biography deals with some of the key moments in Fry's relationship to Cézanne's art. For here, if anywhere, one would expect solidity to loom large. Fry's discovery of Cézanne occurred (at least to the best of his recollection) in 1906, when he first reviewed works by the artist; and, by the late 1930s, this moment had long been recognised as a transformative, albeit contested, moment in his career as a critic. Fry himself stressed the incident in "Retrospect", the concluding essay of his volume *Vision and Design* (1920). Woolf opted not to quote from this in her account of the incident, and instead drew at length from the text of the 1906 review, before adding the following gloss:

> One is reminded of a passage in his letters in which he describes how on his honeymoon he had dug up the head of a column in the sand at Carthage, with a bit of potsherd and his nails. There for a moment Cézanne is seen still half covered in the sand. But half covered he still was and the critic had other matters to attend to. (*RF*, p. 112)

The half-covered state Woolf attributes to the object nicely matches the mode of seeing she ascribes to Fry (the half look of a glimpse), the ambivalent remarks contained in Fry's 1906 review (half elevating, half belittling), *and* Cézanne's lack of prominence in Britain at that time. The discovery of Cézanne, as Wyndham Lewis wrote in *The Athenaeum*,

in 1919, was accompanied by a suspicion, which grew into a 'furious conviction, that a very great artist had been unearthed' (Lewis, 1969, p. 166). Woolf reconfigures Fry's encounter with the artist in terms of his personal history, as though discovering Cézanne was really the recovery of some lost part of himself, some repressed memory or desire. She is also appealing to her reader's memory, since in the previous chapter of the biography she had already quoted the relevant passage from Fry's correspondence, which described a Tunisian adventure Fry shared with his wife, Helen, following their marriage in December 1896. Fry's letter describes how Helen (not he) 'found a corner of a capital sticking out of the earth . . . we were excited as children digging in the sand and finally got it out when it nearly crushed us under its weight' (Fry, 1996, p. 98).

Helen's absence from the second scene of discovery is as poignant as it is conspicuous, the intervening years having seen the onset of the bouts of mental illness that would eventually lead to her permanent institutionalisation. The 'we' of Fry's original letter becomes 'he' in Woolf's reworking of the material. Woolf depicts Fry's critical energies, his 'work', as a compensatory activity for this personal tragedy, as the 'the only way of facing the ruin of private happiness' (*RF*, p. 104), and she is surely implying that Fry's relationship to Cézanne approximates some kind of substitute for his relationship to his wife. After the discovery of a new object, there is always a decision to be made, if not literally then mentally: whether to let go or hold on. For the time being, Fry has to attend to his 'other matters' and leaves the object in its partially covered state. The unwieldy and immobile capital is left 'lying there', never to be possessed, but it is clear that Fry will, in his own way, return to this aborted dig and that the reassessed object will eventually go somewhere – namely to the rest of Cézanne's scattered oeuvre and to the historical figure attached to them. There is, in short, the promise of further encounters in the air, the promise of a lopsided romance or 'odd posthumous relationship' between a man and a body of objects. And what 'one is reminded of' in Woolf's description of this initial encounter is not just an earlier moment of the biography so much as a different text altogether: "Solid Objects".

Woolf's biography gives Fry's earthbound object a protean form, but a clear sense of direction – upwards and outwards. Her description of the first Post-Impressionist Exhibition lifts Cézanne out of the sand and changes him from a capital into a different type of stone object: 'The statue that had lain half hidden in the sand was now revealed' (*RF*, p. 161). The romance's climactic moment, though, occurs when she assesses the success of Fry's monograph on the artist:

> The book of all Roger Fry's books which seems to the common reader at least, to prove the value of destroying theories by acids, because the positive construction left is so very solid, is the Cézanne . . . if the Cézanne stands out among Roger Fry's books like Mont Sainte-Victoire, solid in structure and bathed in light, from it, as from that mountain, other tracts of country became visible. (*RF*, p. 286)

Cézanne has been remade, or doubled, by Fry and is now 'the Cézanne', a book that is 'like Mont Sainte-Victoire' and thus like its subject's subject matter. 'The Cézanne' is a different type of stone from the modest fragment found in the sand. Now dominating the land around it, it has no need of being excavated; it stands in full sight and provides views. Strong enough to resist the effects of critical acids, it is a solid that can withstand the most corrosive of liquids.

If there was something obviously 'John-like' in Fry's desire to hold on to Cézanne, he also contrasts with John in that he (and Bloomsbury) regretted that Cézanne's 'solid and durable' art was not immediately an art of the museums – at least, not in Britain. Cézanne rapidly became bound up in Bloomsbury's relations with one another and, further, with their collective identity. John's failure to articulate to others what he sees in his objects is part of his predicament, but, to Bloomsbury, Fry was *the* person who could do this for Cézanne. He was, so to speak, a John who might persuade Charles to look at the stones differently, even to select them. After the Degas sale, Vanessa Bell would flatter Fry by speculating that had he 'been in London or we had known how to get at you, possibly you might have done something with [Charles] Holmes' (Bell, 1998, pp. 212–13). 'Why wasn't it me instead of Holmes that day?' Fry was still asking Bell, six years later (Fry, 1972, p. 50).

Fry's impact on British collectors was, however, considerable and he acted as an informal advisor to many of the country's early collectors of Cézanne, most notably Samuel Courtauld, whose money eventually allowed many Post-Impressionist paintings to enter the Tate Gallery. Among them was a Cézanne self-portrait, which, Fry noted pointedly in his monograph, '[t]he nation is fortunate in possessing, thanks to the generosity of Mr. Courtauld' (Fry, 1927, p. 54). In a photograph of Fry's "Room in Bernard Street", which Woolf included in her biography of him, the copy he made after this painting can be seen standing on top of a book case. Copying the work was a way to prolong the act of looking, a way of making Cézanne affordable, and a way of keeping 'him' close at hand; an uncanny double of the work in the Tate, it was a reminder to Fry (and to his visitors) of his successful advocacy of the

artist. Placed to the far right of the furniture, it visually balances Marcel Gimond's bust of Vanessa Bell on the opposite side, as though to suggest an equation between Fry's favorite Post-Impressionist painter and his great (elusive) love from the period of the Post-Impressionist exhibitions. What might have passed through his mind as he contemplated this arrangement? With some adroit editing and one final substitution of objects – John for Roger – we might respond in the language of "Solid Objects": 'The contrast . . . fascinated him, and wondering and amazed he asked himself how the two came to exist in the same world, let alone to stand upon the same narrow strip . . . in the same room. The question remained unanswered' (*CSF*, p. 105).

10
Virginia Woolf and Changing Conceptions of Nature

Christina Alt

> The stag-beetle dies slowly (it was John who collected the beetles). Even on the second day its legs were supple. But the butterflies were dead. A whiff of rotten eggs had vanquished the pale clouded yellows which came pelting across the orchard and up Dods Hill and away on to the moor, now lost behind a furze bush, then off again helter skelter in a broiling sun.
>
> (*JR*, p. 23)

Growing up in the closing days of 'the long high summer of Victorian natural history' (Allen, 1994, p. 176), Virginia Stephen and her siblings were familiar with the practices of specimen collection and classification. They netted butterflies and sugared for moths, setting their captures for display in the family 'Museum' (*L*1, p. 2). Appointed to 'the post of name finder' in the family Entomological Society, Virginia was additionally responsible for identifying captures in the Reverend Francis Orpen Morris' works on butterflies and moths (*MB*, p. 104). Partly as a result of this childhood background, images of nature and its study occur with considerable frequency in Woolf's fiction. Her representations of natural history have long been read in primarily symbolic terms: the moth hunt in Woolf's works has been variously equated with the writing process, the suffocation of the individual by social convention, and the destruction of life in the First World War.[1] More recently, there has been a growing interest in viewing Woolf's treatment of nature through an ecocritical frame, and Woolf has been presented as a presciently 'green' author in her attention to the world beyond the human.[2] However, Woolf's representations of nature and its study also demonstrate her engagement with a cluster of competing and cooperating disciplines

within the natural sciences – among them, taxonomic natural history, laboratory biology, ethology and ecology – that shaped the way that nature was seen and described in the early decades of the twentieth century. Through a reading of *Jacob's Room* in the light of turn-of-the-century developments in the study of nature, this chapter will demonstrate that Woolf's nature symbolism is grounded in scientific knowledge and that her ecological outlook was wholly of her time.

As children, Virginia and her siblings were encouraged to take an interest in natural history by their parents. Leslie Stephen botanised with them and served as president of their Entomological Society, while Julia Stephen bought them rum for the sugar mixture used as a lure for moths (*PA*, p. 18, 134; *MB*, p. 104). Throughout the nineteenth century, the study of natural history was an activity common amongst the 'intellectual aristocracy' of which the Stephen family formed a part (Annan, 1955, p. 249). The majority of nineteenth-century practitioners of natural history were amateurs, for little formal training or paid employment in the natural sciences was available in Britain for much of the century. The attention of these amateur practitioners was occupied primarily by the taxonomic project of naming and classifying plant and animal species, and the specimen collection served as the material basis of this 'grand stocktaking' (Salmon, 2000, p. 369). Although this systematic inventory had its origins in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in the nineteenth century a new level of activity was achieved. This was facilitated by the Victorian approval of the task as a rational, productive and improving occupation; by the imperialist drive to achieve a comprehensive catalogue of the world's flora and fauna; and by technical developments such as the dissemination of an effective means of preserving zoological specimens which permitted 'the standardization of nomenclature and established the basic reference material for classification' as well as ensuring a dramatic increase in the number and size of specimen collections (Mearns and Mearns, 1998, p. 45). In 1881, the specimen collection was given independent institutional form in the British Museum (Natural History) and the monumentalisation of the taxonomic system was complete (Stearn, 1998, p. 31).

This was the legacy of natural history to which Virginia and her siblings, as children of the intellectual aristocracy, were heirs. Through the formation of their own Entomological Society and its associated Museum, the Stephen children imitated the institutions of Victorian natural history, and Virginia mimicked the pose of the scholar-naturalist in letters to Thoby, urging her brother to 'write an account of the [family]

Museum' and offering the encouragement, 'but of course, my dear brother, you must do so – this will make your name known in Scientific circles' (*L*1, p. 7). However, the Stephen children's practical education in natural history came not by way of this scholarly tradition but via another, more populist route. Jack Hills gave to the Stephen children his own copies of the Reverend Francis Orpen Morris' natural histories of British butterflies and moths.[3] An entomologist, ornithologist and general nature enthusiast, Morris was one of the 'great mid-Victorian popularisers' of natural history (Allen, 1994, p. 69). He was one of many clergymen-naturalists who, motivated by the doctrine of natural theology according to which the study of nature led the attention 'from the works of Nature up to the God of Nature', sought to promote the practice of natural history (F. O. Morris, 1853, p. iv). He employed, in the words of his son, a 'happy and unstudied' style, treating his subjects 'not as scientific hardnesses, but rather as old friends surrounded with endless reminiscences' (M. C. F. Morris, p. 100). Subsequent judgements of Morris' work have been less appreciative. Writing in 1916, W. H. Mullens and H. Kirke Swann judged that 'Morris was too voluminous to be accurate, and too didactic to be scientific. He accepted records and statements without discrimination, and consequently his work abounds with errors and mistakes' (Mullens and Swann, 1916, p. 416). Nevertheless, Morris' works were regarded as 'classics' by generations of Victorian readers, as demonstrated by the fact that, forty years after the publication of *A History of British Butterflies*, it was to Morris' works that the Stephen children were referred in their entomological investigations (Allen, 1994, p. 123).

Morris and his fellow popularisers owed much of their success to the growing market for works on natural history among the expanding middle class at mid-century. However, this new wave of nature enthusiasts consisted of recreational hobbyists rather than amateur experts, and while they succeeded in making natural history fashionable, they did little to advance it as a science. Writing in 1858, H. T. Stainton complained that 'hardly one collector in a hundred thinks of *studying* Entomology, and not one in ten of those who do makes anything out of his studies' (Stainton, 1858, p. 5). Many treated their collections as decoration; others collected specimens as a philatelist collects stamps, concerned with obtaining rarities, aberrations and complete series. Nevertheless, they shared with their more scientifically-minded counterparts a desire to amass vast collections.

As a result of the long-standing British preoccupation with taxonomic natural history, when a shift in methods did finally occur, the change

was abrupt. Darwin's promulgation of the theory of evolution not only necessitated a shift from belief in fixity to acceptance of change but also initiated a long-delayed methodological shift from description and classification to theorisation and experiment. The fracturing of the natural history tradition by the controversy over evolution permitted the introduction to Britain in the 1870s of the new biology, the laboratory-based work of morphology and physiology that had been developing in the German universities. However, the delay that had attended the new biology's introduction to Britain meant that the opposition between taxonomists and laboratory biologists had acquired 'the gratuitous spite of a war between generations' (Allen, 1994, p. 165). As a result, with the rise of the new biology, 'systematics, natural history, even field work as a whole became irretrievably associated with the mumbling, doddery Old Men' (Allen, 1994, p. 165). Specimen collection, as the material equivalent of the taxonomic catalogue, also fell into disrepute among the rising laboratory biologists. T. H. Huxley, best remembered as Darwin's bulldog in the evolutionary debates but also the foremost advocate of laboratory biology in Britain, asserted, 'I never collected anything, and species work was always a burden to me' (Huxley, 1968, p. 7), while F. O. Bower recalled that, as a student in the late 1870s, he had 'longed for a train of wagons to convey the Cambridge herbarium away to Kew, and so vacate for the new botany the rooms that would serve its needs' (Bower, 1938, p. 102). By the end of the nineteenth century, taxonomic natural history and the associated practice of specimen collection were largely discredited among professional practitioners of the natural sciences. Woolf's use of the laboratory as a site of opportunity and possibility – for Chloe and Olivia in *A Room of One's Own* and for Peggy in *The Years* – and her advocation of experiment – as in her suggestion that one might examine the effects of sexism upon female writers as one would examine the effects of regular and grade A milk upon rats (*AROO*, p. 53) – suggest her receptivity to the outlook of those championing the emergent discipline.

In part because of the separation of the professional and popular study of nature that accompanied the rise of the new biology, the disputes between taxonomists and biologists had little immediate effect upon the average natural history hobbyist. Unlike taxonomy, with its popular parallel in the natural history fads of the nineteenth century, the new biology had no recreational equivalent, and, lacking an alternative, the popular study of nature continued for some time on mid-century lines. Lynn Barber observes that 'popular natural history writing existed in a peculiar vacuum, deriving its biology from Linnaeus, its philosophy

from Paley [the foremost proponent of natural theology] . . . long after these ideas had become outmoded' (Barber, 1980, pp. 71–2). As evidence of this, Morris' mid-century works on British birds and butterflies remained standard popular references, continuing in print until the first years of the twentieth century. New works of popular natural history published after *The Origin of Species* also perpetuated a pre-Darwinian outlook by avoiding contemporary controversies. While F. O. Morris was passionately opposed to the theory of evolution and waged a long and vituperative pamphlet war against the Darwinist position, in popular works such as *A Natural History of British Moths*, written between 1859 and 1870, he makes no explicit reference to evolutionary theory, offering only oblique refutations of the evolutionist position through circuitous assertions of a special and fixed creation, as in his introductory celebration of 'the preservation through all vicissitudes of so many creatures of the hand of the Immortal, which the same hand by His providence has preserved through a "thousand generations" which though to Him "but as yesterday," are coeval in our calculation with the beginning of time itself' (F. O. Morris, 1871, p. xiv). Thus, until the end of the century, natural history as a popular practice proceeded on pre-Darwinian lines. The fact that the children of Leslie Stephen, the godless Victorian who 'attributed his loss of faith quite directly to reading *The Origin of Species*' (Beer, 1996, p. 13), could be brought up in this pre-Darwinian scientific tradition is illustrative of the stagnation of popular natural history in the late Victorian period.

Despite the survival of taxonomic natural history as a popular practice until the turn of the century, however, the late-Victorian context gradually undermined many of the tradition's once characteristic features and prepared the way for its demise. Even though evolutionary theory was not addressed in popular works of natural history, Virginia Stephen and late Victorian natural-history hobbyists more generally were aware of evolutionary concepts.[4] Such ideas, encountered outside the "classic" texts of popular Victorian natural history, encouraged a critical distance from the approach promoted in the works of popular writers such as Morris. Additionally, the growing opposition between science and religion gradually undermined the natural-theological justification of the study of nature as a morally edifying activity. As a result, natural history became simply one form of rational recreation among many, and in order to remain popular it came increasingly to rely on entertainment rather than education as an incentive to participation (Barber, 1980, p. 292). The history of the public aquaria gives evidence of this shift. In the 1870s there was a wave of aquarium-building in

British seaside towns. These aquaria were from the start conceived as entertainment complexes and often included facilities such as concert halls and reading rooms; as time went on they incorporated more and more attractions in their effort to hold the public interest: a swimming bath, skating rink and theatre were added to the Scarborough Aquarium in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth (Pearson, 1991, p. 55). Such developments were criticised as evidence of the degeneration of natural history: Edmund Gosse complained that when his father, Philip Henry Gosse, 'was eagerly proposing [in the 1850s] the preservation of marine animals alive in mimic seas, he certainly did not anticipate that within forty years an aquarium would come to mean a place devoted to parachute monkeys, performing bears and aerial queens of the tightrope' (Gosse, 1890, p. 348). Even with these additional attractions, however, many of the public aquaria failed: by 1914 the Scarborough Aquarium 'was in the hands of liquidators' (Pearson, 1991, p. 55). In *Jacob's Room*, Woolf accurately encapsulates the air of degraded spectacle that pervaded the public aquaria by the final decade of the nineteenth century through her representation of the Scarborough Aquarium and the shabby sensationalism of Captain Boase's 'monster shark,' reduced to 'a flabby yellow receptacle like an empty Gladstone bag in a tank' by its display amongst ashtray-strewn tables and chocolate boxes (*JR*, p. 18). Despite its persistence, by the turn of the century the popular tradition of natural history was in decline.

Other factors were also at work that would affect a shift in popular attitudes to natural history by the early decades of the twentieth century. One such factor was the growing strength of the animal protection movement. During its early, Victorian phase, protectionists had directed their energies primarily against large-scale threats to animals, such as the mass slaughter of birds for the plumage trade and for sport. However, around the turn of the century, protectionists began to recognise the unique threat posed by specimen collectors through their systematic targeting of rare species. W. H. Hudson was one of the first to raise concerns over specimen collection as a threat to wildlife: already in 1894 he was condemning collectors alongside sportsmen and game keepers as 'inveterate bird-destroyers' (Hudson, 1894, p. 32). By 1928, J. C. Squire would summarise the shift in outlook that had occurred since the turn of the century with the assertion,

> Today there are a host of observers who watch birds with enthusiastic affection, never kill a bird, and would never dream of killing

> a rare bird. The modern man who kills a rare bird is not regarded as the hero of an exploit, but as the perpetrator of an unpunishable crime. The collectors, the hoarders of eggs, the stuffers of skins are now a furtive race. (Squire, 1928, p. 14)

This shift in mentality had its first and greatest impact upon students of bird-life, but by the inter-war period a similar shift was apparent in all areas of nature study: 'cabinets of insects, . . . neatly labelled herbaria: these were no longer passing on from father to son' (Allen, 1994, p. 220).

By the early decades of the twentieth century, as a result of the combined effects of the shift from taxonomy to laboratory biology and the growing suspicion of specimen collection prompted by the protection movement, the natural history tradition had fallen into decline. While laboratory biology occupied the attention of professional biologists, it had little to offer amateur nature enthusiasts, and for a time the popular study of nature lost its focus. However, in the years prior to the First World War, a new interest in the observation of living organisms developed among both professional and amateur students of nature. This development reversed the shift indoors occasioned by the rise of laboratory biology and revived field studies without resulting in a reversion to collection.

David Allen argues that in the early decades of the twentieth century there occurred throughout the botanical and zoological sciences 'a shift to movement and dynamism . . . from the dead specimen to the living [organism], from a static viewpoint to an emphasis on change' (Allen, 1994, p. 217). In the plant sciences, this shift first took the form of ecology, the study of the relationships of organisms with their environment and with each other. Studies in plant distribution and vegetation dynamics led to the establishment in 1913 of the British Ecological Society and the *Journal of Ecology*, and in the 1920s ecology spread to zoology with works such as Charles Elton's *Animal Ecology* (1927), which 'popularis[ed] notions such as food-chains, habitat niches, and the natural regulation of numbers' (Allen, 1994, p. 235). In the animal sciences, the interest in living organisms manifested itself first by way of ethology, the study of behaviour. The behaviour of organisms had long been treated as a detail to be noted in passing while pursuing an accurate classification. In the early twentieth century, however, ethology emerged as a discipline in its own right, taking as its goal 'the understanding of what used simply to be recorded, if not ignored' (E. M. Nicholson, 1927, p. v). In the years prior to the First World War,

ornithologists such as Julian Huxley (the grandson of T. H. Huxley) and Edmund Selous began intensive studies into bird courtship and territorial behaviour, and large-scale projects such as ringing schemes were initiated to chart the movements of birds.

The same transition from collection to observation was occurring in all disciplines of zoology. While John Lubbock, writing in 1856, suggested that 'this [the nineteenth] century . . . might be called the age of collections of insects' (Lubbock, 1856, p. 115), Michael Salmon would characterise the twentieth century as 'the age of the study of living insects' (Salmon, 2000, p. 370). The entomologist Jean-Henri Fabre was one of the precursors of ethology as an institutionalised practice, and the reception of his work suggests the chronology of the rise of ethology as a discipline. His *Souvenirs entomologiques* recounts his detailed observations of the 'manners and customs' of common insect species (Legros, 1913, p. 14). It was originally published as a series between 1870 and 1907 (excerpts were first translated into English in 1901) but initially drew little attention. However, in the 1910s, Fabre's works were republished and suddenly, in both France and Britain, 'everyone began to read him, for more of his *Souvenirs entomologiques* were sold in a few months than had been disposed of in more than twenty years' (Legros, 1913, p. 328). Throughout the 1910s and 20s, Fabre's works on the habits of insects were excerpted in periodicals and collected in books. Fabre's late rise to fame suggests the receptivity of the age to a behaviourist approach to the natural world.

Woolf was familiar with Fabre's work at least indirectly through the comments of others in her circle.[5] In April 1918, Woolf recorded in her diary a conversation with Roger Fry in which he had remarked that reading Fabre left him 'relieved in his mind' with a sense that 'after all our war, hideous though it is – ' (*D*1, p. 134), something else remained. That Woolf found similar consolation in the new trend of nature observation is suggested by the contents of her Asheham House diary, kept during 1917 and 1918 as she recovered from a bout of mental illness and monitored the events of the war during her intermittent stays in the Sussex countryside. Woolf's entries in the Asheham House diary differ from her regular diary entries: they are short and factual and focus almost exclusively on household matters and the observation of natural phenomena. She records the species she has sighted in the course of her walks and monitors the progress of species over the course of a summer, from the days when the blues are 'freshly out & swarming' to the day when all remaining blues appear 'ragged & washed out' (*D*1, pp. 40, 46). She describes the characteristic behaviour of species, noting the way in

which rooks rise and settle in groups upon the trees and the tendency of swallows to fly 'in great numbers very low & swift' (*D*1, p. 45); she records the contents of a hawk's meal and speculates that the red spots appearing on the butterflies in the area might be 'some parasite' (*D*1, p. 44). In contrast to the aim of the bug-hunting expeditions of her childhood, the object of her interest is now the observation of living nature.

Just as the nineteenth-century popularity of specimen collection mimicked the taxonomic project, 'species-spotting' and the observation of nature more generally served as a popular parallel to the emerging sciences of ethology and ecology (Allen, 1994, p. 222). In all areas of nature study, the observation of living organisms replaced the collection, classification and display of dead specimens as the prevailing mode of engaging with nature. The popular nature writer W. H. Hudson summed up the contemporary shift in focus in *The Book of a Naturalist* (1919) with his dismissal of the effort 'to weigh, count, measure and dissect for purposes of identification, classification and what not' and his recommendation instead 'to know a creature, undivested of life or liberty or anything belonging to it . . . in the midst of the nature in which it harmoniously moves and has its being' (Hudson, 1919, p. 150).

Woolf's representations of nature and its study in *Jacob's Room* reflect this shift in outlook and practice. She demonstrates her familiarity with the techniques of Victorian natural history, with the use of lanterns, sulphur fumes, camphor and pill boxes, but her treatment of these practices suggests a disapproval that accords with the reorientation of outlook that occurred in the early twentieth-century study of nature. When she employs images drawn from the natural world metaphorically, a contemporary conception of nature and its study informs her usage.

Many readers have recognised in Woolf's images of specimen collection an analogy for the process and consequences of socialisation. Equating the 'lamp of learning' and the light of religion with the lantern that lures insects to their capture or immolation, Woolf suggests that society's promise of inclusion and enlightenment conceals a threat (*JR*, p. 39). Christine Froula notes that Woolf warns against 'attraction to the lamps of a "civilization" that proves dangerous' (Froula, 1986, p. 86), and Harvena Richter likewise reads the moth as a symbolic 'victim in its search for sweetness and for light' (Richter, 1980, p. 15). Kathy J. Phillips suggests a further connection between Jacob's childhood practice of specimen collection and his death in the First World War, arguing that the pastime illustrates the violence inherent in turn-of-the-century

society and serves as not only a foreshadowing of death but also a practical preparation for the destructiveness of war, inculcating Jacob with a capacity for aggression and appropriation and teaching him to regard such behaviour as heroic (Phillips, 1994, pp. 125–6).

In addition to employing specimen collection as a metaphor for social entrapment and the waste of life, Woolf is preoccupied in *Jacob's Room* with naming and the inefficacy of names, and she expresses this concern through reference to the scientific classification of specimens. She depicts Jacob in the act of classification: with Morris' primer before him, he scrutinises a captured moth specimen, observing that

> [t]he upper wings of the moth . . . were undoubtedly marked with kidney-shaped spots of a fulvous hue. But there was no crescent upon the underwing . . . Morris called it "an extremely local insect found in damp or marshy places." But Morris is sometimes wrong. Sometimes Jacob, choosing a very fine pen, made a correction in the margin . . . No, it could not be a straw-bordered underwing. (*JR*, pp. 23–4)

In one sense, Woolf is doing no more than stating a fact when she notes Morris' tendency to error (see Mullen and Swann's judgement of Morris' work above); it is in fact proof of her own credentials as a naturalist that she was alert to Morris' mistakes. In another sense, however, Woolf's representation of a failed attempt at classification indicates her low opinion of the efficacy of taxonomic methods as a means of arriving at meaningful understanding.

A fundamental assumption of the taxonomic method is that a name can define its subject, that a species' scientific name, to quote Linnaeus, '"recalls all the knowledge that may, in the course of time, have been acquired about the body thus named"' (qtd. in Foucault, 2003, p. 174). Woolf, however, presents the naming process not as a revelation of authentic identity but rather as the construction of an artificial persona. The narrator notes that Florinda's name 'had been bestowed upon her by a painter who had wished it to signify that the flower of her maidenhood was still unplucked' (*JR*, p. 77); the imposition of a name functions as an attempt to circumscribe Florinda's identity and limit her to a role of virginity. Similarly, at Cambridge, Sopwith reduces 'old Chucky' to the role of 'the unsuccessful provincial' through his condescending use of a nickname, leaving the boy to lament that no one uses 'Stenhouse his real name' and that 'Sopwith brought back by using the other everything, everything, "all I could never be"' (*JR*, p. 41).

While describing individuals' efforts to use the naming process to control and restrict identity, Woolf maintains that names cannot define their subjects. Betty Flanders assigns to her deceased husband the title of 'Merchant of this city', but she acknowledges that this is merely a gesture towards convention, for 'she had to call him something. An example for the boys'; the issue of his identity remains 'an unanswerable question' (*JR*, p. 16). Similarly, while characters throughout the novel call Jacob's name in the hope of receiving a reply that will allow them to know him, their calls go unanswered. The question of Jacob's nature remains unresolved at his death, and Bonamy calls for 'Jacob! Jacob!' without any hope of a response (*JR*, p. 176).

The identification of specimens is part of a larger process of scientific classification meant to place each species within the hierarchy presumed to exist in nature. Society, Woolf suggests, employs a similar method of categorisation that ignores individual traits in order to classify its members by type: the narrator comments,

> to prevent us from being submerged by chaos, nature and society between them have arranged a system of classification which is simplicity itself; stalls, boxes, amphitheatre, gallery. The moulds are filled nightly. There is no need to distinguish details. (*JR*, pp. 68–9)

Just as Jacob examines the markings of his moth specimen in an effort to determine its species, observers scrutinise Jacob's appearance and attitudes in an attempt to ascertain 'which seat in the opera house was his, stalls, gallery, or dress circle' (*JR*, p. 70). However, like Jacob's moth specimen, which possesses the expected 'kidney-shaped spots of a fulvous hue' but lacks the anticipated 'crescent upon the underwing' (*JR*, p. 23), the question of Jacob's social standing leaves society gossips 'vacillat[ing] eternally' (*JR*, p. 155). The reiterated observation that Jacob is 'extraordinarily awkward . . . [y]et so distinguished looking' (*JR*, pp. 61, 70, 155) suggests the difficulties of categorisation. While even the practical matter of his place in the class hierarchy remains in doubt, the question of his character is an even greater mystery. Relying upon 'the infallible test of appearance', Mrs Norman examines Jacob as a specimen, '[t]aking note of socks (loose), of tie (shabby)', and scrutinising his facial features and behaviour in order to ascertain whether he should be classed as a dangerous man or a boy much like her own son (*JR*, p. 30). However, as the narrator points out, 'of all futile occupations this of cataloguing features is the worst' (*JR*, p. 71). Either classification would reduce Jacob to a type. As Rachel Bowlby notes, Mrs Norman's speculations come 'no nearer to

any "Jacob" when she is likening him to her son than when she is taking him as belonging to the class of men' (Bowlby, 1997, p. 90).

While Woolf denies the possibility of definitive classification, she does not reject as invalid the impulse to know others or to convey this knowledge through art. She acknowledges that 'a profound, impartial, and absolutely just opinion of our fellow-creatures is utterly unknown' (*JR*, p. 77). Nevertheless she is not deterred by those who argue that 'the novelists never catch it [the 'unseizable force' by which we live]; that it goes hurtling through their nets and leaves them torn to ribbons' (*JR*, p. 156). Woolf is reconciled to the unseizable nature of life, for she maintains that it remains possible to be 'surprised in the window corner by a sudden vision that the young man in the chair is of all things in the world the most real, the most solid, the best known to us . . . [though] the moment after we know nothing about him' (*JR*, p. 72). Woolf embraces such fleeting glimpses of life in motion as 'the manner of our seeing' (*JR*, p. 72).

Woolf's descriptions of nature suggest the value of this capacity for momentary vision. In the midst of her account of Jacob's attempts to classify his dead moth specimen, which he never positively identifies, the narrator describes a 'red underwing [that] had circled round the light and flashed and gone. The red underwing had never come back, though Jacob had waited' (*JR*, pp. 23–4). In contrast to his methodical scrutiny of the dead moth, Jacob's sighting of the red underwing is fleeting and beyond his power to control. Yet, far more than the capture, classification, and artificial preservation of insect specimens, this encounter resembles Woolf's own engagement with her written subject. Woolf's narrative is constructed as a series of sightings of Jacob: the characters who interact with him are unable to pin down his nature in their descriptions of him, while, as Hermione Lee has remarked, the narrator herself remains 'always in pursuit of a vanishing hero, who can only be known through unfinished glimpses' (Lee, 1997, p. 8). Jacob remains an elusive presence, sighted rather than caught, throughout the novel. Woolf's descriptions of nature and its study not only point to the restrictiveness and destructiveness of traditional modes of knowing others but also suggest an alternative manner of perception.

In a letter to Gerald Brenan written on 25 December 1922, shortly after the publication of *Jacob's Room*, Woolf states that it is impossible to represent the human soul with any completeness, admitting, 'No one can see it whole . . . The best of us catch a glimpse of a nose, a shoulder, something turning away, always in movement' (*L2*, p. 598). This is not, however, a cause of despair for Woolf: she continues, 'Still, it seems

better to me to catch this glimpse, than to sit down with Hugh Walpole, Wells, etc. etc. and make large oil paintings of fabulous fleshy monsters complete from top to toe' (*L*2, p. 598). Attempting to elaborate upon her view in a postscript, she states, 'I think I mean that beauty, which you say I sometimes achieve, is only got by the failure to get it' (*L*2, p. 599). The renunciation of capture is central to Woolf's literary project.

Critics have noted Woolf's use of specimen collection and classification as analogies for the writing process before. Harvena Richter has read the moth as at once emblematic of the 'words and ideas' that the writer pursues through 'the dark places of the brain' and of 'the questing creative mind' itself (Richter, 1980, pp. 13, 15). Richter is correct that the moth is a multifaceted symbol; however, her reading of the moth hunt as an emblem of '[Woolf's] own creative process' sits uneasily alongside her assertion that the writer's identification with the moth arises from a shared 'sense of being pursued, being destroyed by unknown and hostile forces' (Richter, 1980, pp. 13, 16). Judy Larrick Robinson similarly presents specimen collection as a metaphor for possessiveness and destructiveness while at the same time arguing that Woolf employed the image of 'netting' to describe her own creative 'method of catching fragments, examining them in different lights and then assembling [them] . . . to make them whole' (Robinson, 2000, pp. 152–3). Rachel Sarsfield notes the internal contradictions of these arguments and attempts to resolve them through her own contention that the moth hunt became for Woolf an increasingly negative symbol and that her use of the analogy in relation to writing indicated her growing sense of the futility of writing as a process which, in seeking to capture a living subject, inevitably destroyed it. Sarsfield argues that '[i]n setting up the associations that she did between lepidoptera, life, and writing, eventually Woolf backed (or pinned) herself into a corner' (Sarsfield, 2004, p. 216). Quoting Woolf's declaration in "Craftsmanship" that 'when words are pinned down they fold their wings and die', Sarsfield judges, 'this conclusion is a fatal one for a writer to come to, and . . . may have been literally fatal to Virginia Woolf' (Sarsfield, 2004, p. 216).

Reference to trends in the study of nature during Woolf's lifetime offers an alternative resolution to the conflicting interpretations that proliferate around Woolf's use of imagery drawn from nature and its study. In her use of images of specimen collection and classification, Woolf was knowingly referencing a practice widely regarded as outmoded and discredited in order to critique a fictional method that she regarded as inappropriate to the age and inadequate as a means of representing life. Her simultaneous allusions to alternative approaches

to the study of nature suggest a different method of perceiving and recording life. Returning for a moment to "Craftsmanship", the essay that Sarsfield cites as proof of Woolf's disillusionment with writing, I would note that while Woolf does indeed condemn the pinning down of words to single, invariable meanings in practical usage and their orderly arrangement in dictionaries, she also offers a contrasting vision of words as living organisms in constant motion and interaction with one another, 'ranging hither and thither, . . . falling in love, and mating together' (*CE*2, p. 250) and through these 'swift marriages' creating new phrases, 'perfect images,' works of art (*CE*2, p. 251). She depicts the writer as an observer and recorder of these living organisms and their interrelations, 'peer[ing] at [words] over the edge of that deep, dark and fitfully illuminated cavern in which they live – the mind' (*CE*2, p. 250). Against writing conceived as the capture of words and their arrangement in a fixed system, she sets the alternative of writing as a record of the observed interactions of living language.

Woolf's modernist reconsideration of the way in which life could best be perceived and described coincided with a shift in the focus and methodology adopted in the study of nature. From both past and contemporary scientific methods, she drew metaphors for the perception and representation of life. Through the analogy of specimen collection and classification, she condemned the reduction of individuals to narrow identities within fixed hierarchies. At the same time, her celebration of the ephemeral sighting of a life in motion as 'the manner of our seeing' found fitting expression in imagery drawn from the contemporary study of the living organism in action in its own environment (*JR*, p. 72).

Notes

1. See Richter 1980, Sarsfield 2004, and Phillips 1994 respectively.
2. See, for example, Westling 1999 and Sultzbach 2006.
3. In "Sketch of the Past", Woolf writes of "[Jack's] copy of Morris's *Butterflies and Moths*", a reference that conflates Morris' *A History of British Butterflies* (1852–53) and four-volume *A Natural History of British Moths* (1859–70) (*MB*, p. 104). It is therefore unclear which work or works by Morris the Stephen children received.
4. In a letter to Thoby written in 1896, the fourteen-year-old Virginia demonstrates her familiarity with Darwin's theory of the descent of man (*L*1, p. 2).
5. Vanessa Bell mentions Fabre to her sister in the letter often cited as the inspiration for *The Waves* (once provisionally titled *The Moths*). Her interest in Fabre's findings on moth behaviour contrasts with the distaste she expresses for the capture of specimens (qtd. in Quentin Bell, 1972, 2, p. 126).

11

Comparative Modernism: The Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance

Kristin Czarnecki

In October 1928, Virginia Woolf was preparing the Cambridge lectures on women and fiction that would become the text of *A Room of One's Own* the following year. In October of 1928, Zora Neale Hurston apprenticed herself to a voodoo priestess in New Orleans as part of her ongoing research into African-American folk culture. On the surface, two more dissimilar women could hardly be found, yet Virginia Woolf and Zora Neale Hurston do warrant comparison. Both sought innovative narrative means of articulating human experience. Both located similar expressions of intense emotion. And both were at the vanguard of their artistic coteries, the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance. In this chapter, I discuss each group's formation along with some of their principal figures and activities, consider the influence of group identity on Woolf and Hurston, and explore factors contributing to each group's legacy. It is beyond my scope here to rehearse the wealth of critical studies, memoirs and fictional accounts of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance. Rather, I wish to suggest how Bloomsbury and Harlem might be brought closer together in our minds, our scholarship and our classrooms, as placing them alongside one another affords fresh insights into transatlantic modernism – the outpourings of creative expression in London and New York City in the early twentieth century.

Since their beginnings, the groups have acquired their share of controversy. Perhaps the only aspect of Bloomsbury uniformly agreed upon is the lack of agreement regarding exactly who or what Bloomsbury is. The term is 'elusive . . . difficult to define, complex in character, burdened with decades of misinterpretation', states Richard Shone, curator of the 2000 Bloomsbury art exhibit at London's Tate Gallery (Shone, 1999, p. 4). Adding to the confusion are notions of a Bloomsbury 'aura,

a distinctive mode of self-presentation that makes its projects and politics notoriously difficult to situate' (Blair, 2004, p. 813). The 'almost unbearable' overuse of the term 'Bloomsbury Group' fuels the problem further (Lee, 1997, p. 258), and essential questions about the Group remain at large. Were the Bloomsburies Victorian or modern? Bourgeois or bohemian? Conventional or groundbreaking? What did they set out to do, and did they succeed? There is no consensus given their diversity as well as clashing contemporary assessments, for '[e]ach commentator has their private notion of Bloomsbury which presumably satisfies their own tastes and prejudices' (Shone, 1999, p. 4) – the 'versioning' Brenda Silver addresses in *Virginia Woolf Icon* regarding 'the production of multiple versions of [Woolf's] texts or her image' (Silver, 1999, p. xvi).

In the main, the Bloomsbury Group refers to the close-knit set of writers, artists and intellectuals living in London's Bloomsbury neighbourhood over several decades starting in 1904, when Virginia Woolf (then Stephen) and her siblings, Vanessa, Thoby and Adrian, left their childhood home in Kensington for Bloomsbury after their father's death. Core group members include the Stephens; Thoby's Cambridge friends Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Lytton Strachey, and Saxon Sydney-Turner; E. M. Forster, John Maynard Keynes, and Desmond and Molly MacCarthy; and later the artists Roger Fry and Duncan Grant. The Group gathered in the Stephens' home at 46 Gordon Square to discuss literature, philosophy and art – the celebrated Thursday evenings of 1905. Initially reticent, they came to enjoy risqué topics such as sex, open marriage and homosexuality, and shocking each other, as when Lytton infamously queried Vanessa about a stain on her dress.[1]

The Group's creative endeavours include Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist Exhibition of 1910, the opening of the Omega Workshops in 1913, publications at the Woolfs' Hogarth Press, and Virginia Woolf's novels with jacket cover art by Vanessa Bell. Group members also enjoyed outings to the theatre, concerts and art exhibitions, and regularly exchanged visits, gossip and letters. Their political activities are also legendary, such as the *Dreadnought* hoax of 1910, Strachey's biography stripping eminent Victorians of their mythology, Clive Bell's anti-war pamphlet of 1915 and several members' conscientious objection during the First World War. Comprised of myriad people and events, Bloomsbury is alternately lauded for artistic innovation and scorned for elitism and eccentricity.

Reflections on the Harlem Renaissance diverge widely as well, beginning with precisely when and how it started. The term denotes the period of extraordinary artistic and literary flowering among African-Americans in New York City's Harlem neighbourhood in the first part of the twentieth

century. As with Bloomsbury, many trace its origins to a specific instance, albeit a less organic one than that of the group overseas. The Harlem Renaissance is generally considered to have begun in February 1919, when the African-American regiment of New York's National Guard marched down Fifth Avenue after the First World War, heralding an immediately public, political phenomenon – although Langston Hughes claims the Harlem Renaissance began with cultural events.[2] The period drew to a close in the 1930s with the Great Depression, yet, as with Bloomsbury, it transcends spatial and temporal boundaries, with key figures such as Hurston publishing well into the 1940s, not to mention the 'international literary appropriation of Harlem' as theme in years to come (Löbbermann, 2001, p. 211).

Prominent Harlem Renaissance figures include Alain Locke, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson and Charles S. Johnson, intellectuals expounding an African-American political and aesthetic call-to-arms, and numerous writers, poets and artists, including Hurston, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Nella Larsen, Jessie Redmon Fauset, Jean Toomer and Aaron Douglas, many committed to revolutionising not only creative expression, but also the fabric of American society. While Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington, DC boasted African-American talent at the time, Harlem became the nucleus for artists seeking a like-minded community and opportunities to showcase their work. 'The New Negroes involved in the artistic flourishing of the 1920s are thus rightly not seen as a spontaneous outburst of creativity but as the most recent high point in [a] long, upward-moving cultural curve' (Maus, 2004, p. 740).

As in Bloomsbury, art and politics converged in the Harlem Renaissance, primarily regarding the conviction among its stalwarts that African-American artistic accomplishments would foster greater racial tolerance in America. Several Harlem Renaissance writers were uncomfortable bearing the burden of liberating the race, while others could conceive of nothing more important. And so works ranged from the politically radical, such as essays on the white power structure and the content of the magazines *The Crisis*, *Opportunity*, *The Messenger* and *The Liberator* – titles signifying their editors' weighty goals – to novels and plays modelled on European forms and the sole issue of *Fire!!* magazine in 1926, a collaboration of Hurston, Hughes, Douglas and Wallace Thurman defiantly free of racial uplift propaganda.

Harlem Renaissance figures also enjoyed a variety of cultural activities, attending lectures, plays, poetry readings and theatre performances, as well as annual literary awards banquets sponsored by *The Crisis* and

Opportunity. Harlemites frequented cabarets and jazz clubs, as did people from around the city. Other social events included Jessie Fauset's tea parties, where everyone spoke French, and Thursday evenings of another sort: boisterous parties lasting far into the night full of storytelling, singing, dancing and cooking, with artists and writers paying a dollar at the door to help the host or hostess make rent. With guests at such parties including the openly homosexual Thurman and Richard Bruce Nugent, the Harlem Renaissance, like the Bloomsbury Group, helped effect a shift from 'Victorian morality to modernist blasphemy' (Boyd, 2003, p. 123).

Beneath the groups' surface parallels lie deeper affinities, such as their political stances. Unlike those who view Bloomsbury as largely an aesthetic enterprise, Christine Froula establishes it as far more politically engaged than previously understood, linking its project with that of the Enlightenment: 'an unfinished and unfinishable struggle for human (including economic) rights, democratic self-governance, world community, and peace' (Froula, 2005, p. xii).[3] From the Group's inception, its members spoke and wrote openly about the atrocities in their midst: 'racialized imperialisms, the class system, the sex/gender system, genocidal persecution, and war' (Froula, 2005, p. 1). With its pacifism, civic-minded lectures, essays, volunteerism, economic treatises and the political underpinnings of Hogarth Press, Bloomsbury encompasses far more than just a style.[4] Froula repositions the Group at the forefront of acknowledged modernist movements.

Several of Bloomsbury's principal concerns find their counterparts in the Harlem Renaissance, namely the desire to establish a civilisation 'that had never existed' (Froula, 2005, p. xii). Along with Jim Crow restrictions in the American South, African-Americans contended with discriminatory practices in the North, thus Bloomsbury's 'belief in reason's power to emancipate human beings from prejudice and violence' (Froula, 2005, p. 5) aligns with Du Bois's tenet that reason would eventually prevail over racism in America. Du Bois's faith in the 'efficacy of intellectual endeavour and in the power of logic and reason to persuade people of goodwill to do as they should, to follow the dictates of their values, both political and moral' (Gibson, 1989, p. vii) demonstrates the Harlem Renaissance and the Bloomsbury Group standing upon similar conceptual ground.

A recurring criticism of Bloomsbury is that it 'was a nest of traitors', that after the First World War, its members sought to undermine the tenets of empire (Hussey, 2004, p. 10), which of course they did, as Froula also recounts. 'Bloomsbury contested contemporary *reality*

against conventions masquerading as "realism"', writes Froula, thereby disturbing those charged with disseminating 'realism' to the general public (Froula, 2005, p. 16). Similarly, African-Americans in possession of their own rich culture strove to counter the Anglo-European reality forced upon them for centuries. White publishers and patrons encouraged black writers only so far, however, often favouring humorous stories in the black vernacular to those with middle-or upper-class characters critiquing American racism. Despite the 1920s vogue for all things black, white-owned publishing houses discouraged endeavours threatening the status quo, from which Harlem Renaissance figures faced suspicion and disapproval.

Virginia Woolf responded variously to her group affiliation. In "Old Bloomsbury" (1922), she recalls her initial bedazzlement with her new neighbourhood, the thrill of mixed-gendered, unsupervised conversations at 46 Gordon Square. Bloomsbury's vibrancy presented an innovative poetics in contrast to the burdensome, repressive social values of Kensington. With the University of London drawing foreigners from Europe and the colonies, and the Georgian townhouse, 'respectable in association and easily divisable into independent living spaces', also attracting young women and men to the neighbourhood, Bloomsbury acquired an eclectic, international flair in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries (Blair, 2004, p. 820). With her love of street haunting, Woolf would have experienced first-hand her new community's cultural conditions. Indeed, finds Hermione Lee, 'Virginia Stephen was never closed off from new encounters' (Lee, 1997, p. 266). Londoners living outside the parameters of Bloomsbury also gravitated toward the area with a 'blend of contempt, curiosity, and thrill-seeking [in response] to the metropolitan miscegenation' they saw there (Blair, 2004, p. 824). Bloomsbury under scrutiny surely influenced Woolf's writing, as women in her works often suffer the subjective gaze of others.

The rush of excitement abated in Bloomsbury as Thoby died, Vanessa married and Leonard Woolf left for Ceylon, yet new events arose to help fill the voids, and members enjoyed burgeoning creative and critical success. Over the years Woolf defended the Group from 'Bloomsbury baiters' who viewed her and her cohort as a clique of privileged aesthetes (*D*4, p. 289). She considered 46 Gordon Square 'a great advance in civilisation' and often mentioned the Group with admiration and pride, comprised as it was of family members and friends (*MB*, p. 196). In time, however, she wearied of all the fuss. The term 'Bloomsbury Group' became 'a journalistic irritation, a term of abuse which made her see red,

or a "long since dead phantom"', as she writes to her nephew Quentin (Lee, 1997, pp. 260–1). In 1935 she declares, 'I rather dread Bloomsbury', preferring the 'hard fact of the Stephen girls', her brother Adrian's daughters, to Vanessa's daughter Angelica, beautiful and sophisticated beyond her years (*D*4, p. 274). Today's equivocal Bloomsbury renderings come as no surprise if even Woolf asks, 'where does Bloomsbury end? What is Bloomsbury?' (*MB*, pp. 198–9) and in a diary entry of 1929 refers to it as 'done with' (*D*3, p. 219).

Zora Neale Hurston also felt ambivalence toward her literary group. In particular, she became quickly and increasingly uneasy with the bourgeois leanings of Du Bois and Locke, who believed African-Americans would gain an entrée into mainstream society through the sophisticated cultural accomplishments of the Talented Tenth, America's small percentage of college-educated, erudite urban blacks. As her first biographer, Robert Hemenway, observes, 'She, more than any other Renaissance artist, struggled with the dangers of surveying the masses from the mountaintop' (Hemenway, 1980, p. 50). Writers of the Harlem Renaissance deliberated over literary depictions of black culture, for instance, with the black vernacular, or dialect writing, constituting a particular source of controversy. As adapted by white writers and urged by white patrons and publishers, dialect writing tended to confine African-Americans within an exotic, folksy or humorous framework. Thus many black writers eschewed using it in their works for fear of propagating base stereotypes.

Hurston opposed such racial uplift agenda for compromising creative expression. Raised in America's first incorporated all-black town, Eatonville, Florida, on the rhythms of black dialect, she defied any such proscriptions on her writing. Vowing to people her pages and stages with authentic African-American life, she writes of country folk and voodoo, puts dialogue in the black vernacular and casts her plays with the darkest African-Americans she can find.[5] Like Woolf, she also deprecated her group over the years, referring to herself and other black intellectuals as the 'Niggerati' and calling those whites interested in Black Harlem 'Negrotarians' (Boyd, 2003, pp. 116, 110). Her 1942 autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road*, contains just two scant paragraphs on the 'so-called Negro Renaissance' (Hurston, 1996, p. 138).

Yet Hurston immersed herself in Harlem life, relishing the regard her abundant and immediately obvious talent brought her. 'I set my hat at a certain angle and saunter down Seventh Avenue, Harlem city', she writes in "How It Feels To Be Colored Me" (1928), 'feeling as snooty as the lions in front of the Forty-Second Street Library' (Hurston, 1995, p. 829). As Bloomsbury represented 'an emancipated life' for Woolf (Snaith, 2000,

p. 28), Harlem conferred new freedoms upon Hurston. Winning accolades for her writing and befriending influential people, she enjoyed the Harlem literati's social scene and attendant publishing and employment opportunities. Her association with *Opportunity* magazine and its editor, Charles S. Johnson, led her to author Fannie Hurst, who offered her a job, and author and activist Annie Nathan Meyer, who obtained a scholarship for her to Barnard College and admission as its first African-American student. Meeting Langston Hughes at an *Opportunity* awards dinner proved equally momentous, sparking years of friendship and artistic collaboration.[6]

Although she never earned much money from her writing, Hurston socialised with the Harlem Renaissance's brightest literary stars and wealthiest patrons. Unlike Woolf, restricted from Cambridge, she also received a formal education, first at Barnard and then at Columbia University, studying under renowned anthropologist Franz Boas. One criticism levelled at Hurston, then, is her presumed disconnection from the African-American masses and her inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the hobbling effects of racism. Yet as Woolf refused to see women as victims despite patriarchal injustice, Hurston refused to see her race as second-class citizens, famously asserting, in "How It Feels To Be Colored Me", 'I am not tragically colored. . . . I do not belong to the sobbing school of Negrohood who hold that nature somehow has given them a low-down dirty deal' (Hurston, 1995, p. 827).

Unfortunately Harlem was not devoid of low-down dirty deals, especially concerning white patronage of black creativity. Hurston's relationship with her own white patron, Charlotte Osgood Mason, complicates her conception of autonomous black life. A wealthy widow, Mason financed several Harlem Renaissance luminaries, requiring them to call her Godmother and never divulge the source of their funding. While Mason's money allowed Hurston to live as a professional writer, nearly unheard of for an African-American woman at the time, it crippled her artistic freedom and their relationship devolved into 'dependency and bitterness' (Hemenway, 1980, p. 105). Mason was incensed at "How it Feels To Be Colored Me" for instance, not because of its inflammatory content, but because Hurston did not seek her permission to publish it. Mason also demanded meticulous expense reports from Hurston on everything from food to sanitary napkins – excessive supervision that 'destroys my self-respect and utterly demoralizes me for weeks', Hurston writes (Hurston, 2002, p. 156).

Godmother was not the only barrier to Hurston's literary freedom. *Dust Tracks on a Road* aimed in part to chronicle racist American tenets,

particularly the hypocrisy of warring for freedom overseas in the Second World War while denying it to black citizens at home. As Boyd explains, 'US involvement in the war greatly influenced Bertram Lippincott's reading of Hurston's manuscript', prompting him to excise portions of the text critical of America's principles and President (Boyd, 2003, p. 349). An excised chapter, "Seeing the World As It Is", restored to the text by The Library of America in 1995, presents a fascinating and provocative treatise on race, imperialism and war. 'I am not bitter', writes Hurston, 'but I see what I see. [Roosevelt] can call names across an ocean, but he evidently has not the courage to speak even softly at home' (Hurston, 1996, p. 261). Restricted from such commentary, *Dust Tracks* appeared to downplay or ignore racial injustice.

Hurston's later essays are no less controversial. In "The 'Pet' Negro System" (1943), she explains how every white southern man has his favourite Negro, extolled for being better than his brethren and therefore used to denigrate them further. In the tones of a faux minister – 'Brothers and Sisters, I take my text this morning from the Book of Dixie' (Hurston, 1995, p. 914) – Hurston deplores and, some believe, accepts the system for easing what would otherwise be the South's even more explosive racial tensions. In "My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience" (1944), she recounts a 1931 visit to a New York City doctor who examined her in a closet, so mortifying was her presence to him and his staff. "Crazy for This Democracy" (1945) again lambastes US diplomacy, playing on Roosevelt's term for America, the Arsenal of Democracy, by calling it the 'arse-and-all', feigning to have misheard him (Hurston, 1995, p. 946).

Although Hurston insisted all her life on the mutual exclusivity of art and politics, her fiction also teems with feminist and racial sensibilities. Her short stories "Sweat" (1926) and "The Gilded Six-Bits" (1933) stress the interconnections among marriage, money and women's identity, for example, while segregated bodies and burials in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) lay bare the depths of bigotry. "Sweat" in particular addresses issues found in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929). The story of Delia Jones, who supports herself and her abusive husband, Sykes, by taking in white people's washing, "Sweat" demonstrates a woman's economic sovereignty and home of her own as keys to freedom. As the story begins, Sykes grows increasingly furious at the piles of fresh clean laundry stacked around the house. The whiteness of the clothes reminds him of Delia's white customers and his emasculation at living off 'white' money earned by his wife in the Jim Crow South.

Throughout the ordeal that is her marriage, Delia's job and income constitute a means of psychological sustenance. 'Too late now to hope

for love', she thinks. 'Too late for everything except her little home. She had built it for her old days, and planted one by one the trees and flowers there. It was lovely to her, lovely' (Hurston, 1995, p. 958). Fearing its loss when her husband threatens to drive her out and move in with his mistress, Delia lets nature take its course when a rattlesnake Sykes kept on the porch to terrorise her gets loose and fatally bites him instead. As Boyd notes, "Sweat" expresses 'the jobless black man's resentment of his working woman' and 'makes it clear . . . that Hurston placed great value on a woman's ability to work and become financially independent, something she'd been struggling to do for more than half her life by 1926' (Boyd, 2003, pp. 137, 138).

Woolf's personal, publishing and financial situation contrasts starkly with Hurston's, yet she too bears criticism for being aloof, sequestered in not one but two homes with a private income and her own printing press. The sole extant recording of her voice bears the snootiest of English accents, and snide remarks about the working-class pepper her diaries and letters. Such is the one-dimensional Bloomsbury-bashing picture of Woolf. The truth lies deeper, of course, for although *Orlando* came under scrutiny when the Home Office received complaints about the novel and the suggestion that it ought to be suppressed, Woolf's true censors were public sentiment, her fluctuating health and her own self-doubt.[7]

In the assertive "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" (1923), Woolf goes toe-to-toe with Arnold Bennett, critiquing his outdated narrative method, particularly regarding character development. Novels ought to 'express character', Woolf states, not 'preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire' (*CE*1, p. 324). Furthermore, each author inevitably brings elements of her own character into her literary creations, refuting Bennett's contention that novels succeed only 'if the characters are real' (*CE*1, p. 325). Continuing to critique Edwardians such as Bennett and H. G. Wells, "Modern Fiction" (1925) similarly heralds a new kind of literature, advocating narrative innovation and greater psychological realism in place of conventional plot. Writers ought to present the 'myriad impressions' of an 'ordinary mind on an ordinary day', Woolf states (*CE*2, p. 106).

Other writings find Woolf less demonstrative. While *A Room of One's Own* brilliantly analyses the historical conditions limiting women's forays into fiction, Woolf submerges her feminist rhetoric to reach a wider audience and placate potential (male) critics. Several years later she strives to remove all 'preaching' from her novel *The Years* (1937), originally comprised of the alternating essay and novel chapters of *The*

Pargiters. Woolf's diary entries while writing *The Pargiters* reveal her growing misgivings concerning this technique. 'Looming behind [*The Pargiters*] I can just see the shape of pure poetry beckoning me', she writes (*D*4, p. 145). 'I mean to keep the rhythm & convey the meaning. It tends more & more, I think . . . to drama' (*D*4, p. 168). She regrets her tendency to sound didactic and desires 'to be free, in fiction, making up my scenes again – however discreetly' (*D*4, p. 145). Like Hurston, she 'saw art and discursiveness as opposed, and the presentation of "fact" inimical to art' (Heilbrun, 1990, p. 82). Julia Briggs also notes Woolf's struggle in her fiction 'between an idea of formal beauty and social comment, between abstraction and instruction' (Briggs, 2005, p. 29) – a struggle transforming the potential 'talking cure' of *The Pargiters* into the suppressed 'talking symptoms' of *The Years* (Froula, 2005, p. 234).

Shortly after *The Years*, however, comes the unabashed feminist, pacifist stance of *Three Guineas* (1938), proposing that war may be averted through women's actions and an overhaul of patriarchal mores. 'As Woolf's writing consistently demonstrates', states Hussey, 'war is not simply a matter of battlefields and politicians: it is also a cultural struggle that persists long after the guns stop firing, a war in which, in effect, the carnage is but a temporary eruption in physical violence of a mental violence that is the condition of the modern world' (Hussey, 2004, p. 17). Cultures built on 'exclusive masculinity' and the 'Victorian separation of spheres', for instance, breed antagonisms in family dynamics as well as in military operations (Hussey, 2004, p. 17). Clarissa's husband Richard in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) outlines English colonialism from his Westminster office, while Peter Walsh spends years as an administrator in India, the professional experiences of both men compromising their relationships with women.

Similarly, Jim and Arvay Meserve, the white married protagonists of Hurston's post-war novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948), enact within their home the racist and sexist paradigms playing out on a broader scale in America at the time, with Jim growing wealthy on African-American labour and brutalising his wife beneath a veneer of charm and amiability. The novel reflects concerns found throughout Hurston's oeuvre, such as marriage as a threat to women's selfhood, sexual violence as a tool of oppression, and the link between misogyny and racism, including white women's exploitation of patriarchal constructs at black women's expense. At one point in her long marriage, feeling oppressed by her husband's wealth, Arvay recalls her childhood poverty as virtuous, simple, 'a state to be desired' (Hurston, 2001, p. 272). Confronted with rats and roaches in her mother's home, however, she

shudders to think that if not for Jim, she might be living this way still, given her lack of job skills and her financial dependence. Suddenly her beautiful home near the coast becomes what her husband had always meant it to be: compensation for emotional emptiness and justification for abuse.

Jeannette McVicker and Kristina Deffenbacher are among scholars linking Bloomsbury and Harlem for their similar sensibilities. McVicker would bring the Harlem Renaissance further into assessments of the modernist period to understand modernism's complex political implications. Finding affinities between Woolf and Hurston's 'pointed socio-political critique within narratives of skilful beauty' (McVicker, 1994, p. 279), McVicker encourages her students to consider the dynamics of margins, centres, gender and race in modern women's literature. Deffenbacher reads *Mrs. Dalloway*, *A Room of One's Own*, and Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* alongside one another to clarify each writer's concept of the female self as defined by domestic space and material barriers. She also compares Delia in Hurston's story "Sweat" to the women Woolf describes in *A Room*, all of whom are traditionally subject to men's jurisdiction. 'Each writer faces a different set of spatial negotiations determined by her race and class position as well as by her gender', Deffenbacher explains, yet 'for both . . . a self defined in relation to domestic space seems necessary to the creative process' (Deffenbacher, 2003, p. 106). Deffenbacher's notion of psychic housekeeping aptly describes the journeys of self-discovery undertaken by women in each work.

Such brief discussions of seminal texts by Woolf and Hurston cannot fully explain their intricacies, yet they highlight the aesthetic and political notions running in tandem throughout their lives and writing. With 'Bloomsbury' and 'Harlem Renaissance' as catchwords in the public domain, literary group affiliation provided both women with an outlet for developing their craft and having their voices heard, crucial to early twentieth-century women writers. Growing generalisations and misperceptions about each group also presented them with concepts to define themselves against. By resisting and complicating the 'overdetermined state' of Bloomsbury and the Harlem Renaissance (Löbberman, 2001, p. 212), Woolf and Hurston oppose categorisation and group mentality, so damaging to the creative spirit and to African-American and female psyches. Themselves uncategorisable, they found art and human life too various for false paradigms.

The Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance began to wane in the 1930s, as fortunes changed and Enlightenment ideals came

under siege in both countries. Bloomsbury suffered the deaths of Lytton Strachey in 1932, Roger Fry in 1934 and, of course, Virginia Woolf in 1941. While Leonard Woolf kept Virginia's works in print and strategically published many more over the years, other Group members suffered critical neglect and 'sagging' reputations (Marler, 1997, p. 44). On a larger scale, fascism spread throughout Europe, rendering the civilisation so arduously fought for increasingly untenable. Group members experienced the horrors of war first-hand in the bombing of their London homes, Vanessa's billeting of soldiers at Charleston, and most grievously in the death of Julian Bell, killed while driving an ambulance in the Spanish Civil War. The war also struck a blow to feminism, as thousands of women employed outside the home during the war found themselves confined there again once it ended.

Individual and national circumstances blighted the Harlem Renaissance as well. Due in part to the stock market crash of October 1929, white patrons withdrew funding from their African-American protégés. Magazines lost subscribers and folded, books went out of print, and artists and writers left Harlem or the world of literature for other pursuits. Hurston travelled and recorded stories in the late 1930s for the Federal Writers' Project, a branch of Roosevelt's Work Projects Administration, one of 'several relief programs that benefited many black professionals' (Boyd, 2003, p. 278), and she continued to publish fiction and essays into the 1940s, travelling extensively and eventually settling in Florida. Charles S. Johnson and James Weldon Johnson became faculty members at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, while Jessie Fauset married and became a high school teacher after tirelessly promoting black women writers and artists and publishing four novels of her own, the last in 1933. After devastating personal and professional troubles, including a highly publicised divorce and accusations of plagiarism, Nella Larsen literally disappeared from the Harlem scene.

Additionally, whites in the early 1930s were overtaking Harlem spaces, particularly cabarets and jazz clubs – 'Negrotarians' for sociological observation, others for the chance to let loose and 'go native', both instances reflecting further debasement of African-American life. Harlemites resented being gawked at 'like amusing animals in a zoo', for while whites filled black clubs uptown, blacks were still restricted from white clubs downtown (Hughes, 2004, p. 1326). Boyd notes that black-owned Harlem speakeasies and dance halls garnered much-need money from white patrons, but as far as Langston Hughes was concerned, Harlem 'became utterly commercial, planned for the downtown tourist trade, and therefore dull' (Hughes, 2004, p. 1327).

Beyond the neighbourhood, racism worsened. Lynching terrorised African-Americans in the South, with Roosevelt refusing to support anti-lynching legislation for fear of retribution in the southern-controlled Congress.[8] Discriminatory housing policies in the North drove many blacks out of urban centres, and during the Depression black unemployment rates skyrocketed nationwide.[9] Moreover, history repeated itself when African-American soldiers of World War II returned home to heightened levels of bigotry. Not until 1948 did President Harry Truman call for an end to racial segregation in the military. Harlem at mid-twentieth-century became synonymous with inner-city crime, suffering 'almost all the racial and social hardships that many had hoped would be nonexistent in the finest urban community that blacks had ever occupied in the United States' (J. Anderson, 1981, p. 347).

Hurston, too, experienced a series of crises at mid-century. *Seraph on the Suwanee* received mixed reviews in 1948, and in 1949 she suffered scandalous – and erroneous – accusations of child molestation; her passport proved she was in Honduras at the time the alleged incidents took place. Nevertheless 'Hurston was humiliated by the whole ordeal', writes Boyd, and 'the fact that a black court employee leaked the story was almost too much for her to bear. "That is the blow that knocked me loose from all that I have ever looked to and cherished", she cried' (Boyd, 2003, p. 396). Financially dependent on writing that no longer sold well, Hurston worked as a librarian in the late 1950s until being fired by her white male supervisor for being 'too well-educated for the job' (Boyd, 2003, p. 426). Her employment as a high school English teacher was similarly short-lived due primarily to her lack of a teaching certificate (Boyd, 2003, p. 428). Records show her applying for welfare in later years and suffering poor health, including a stroke, while working on a never-published book on the life of King Herod. She died after a second stroke in Fort Pierce, Florida, in 1960.

The legacies of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance reflect their dynamic and multifaceted histories. For Bloomsbury, what began in a London drawing room currently inspires global fascination. As 'modernism is among other things a determined response to the specific spaces in which it takes shape, advertises its cultural value, and contests for social power', Bloomsbury's remaining physical places play a key role in its legacy (Blair, 2004, p. 814). Preeminent among them are 46 Gordon Square, 27 Fitzroy Square, and 22 Hyde Park Gate, each adorned with a round blue plaque noting names and dates of residency. Several 'Bloomsbury' homes exist outside London as well: Monk's House, the Woolfs' home in Rodmell, East Sussex; Vanessa's

home in Charleston; and the Stephens' summer home, Talland House, in Cornwall, with its view of the Godrevy Lighthouse. Although Woolf believed 'pilgrimages to the shrines of famous men' ought to be condemned as 'sentimental journeys' (*BP*, p. 106), her own homes attract people from around the world.

Bloomsbury descendants also factor into the Group's legacy. Vanessa's daughter Angelica Garnett, the editor of Woolf's diaries, Olivier Bell, and Olivier and Quentin Bell's daughters, Cressida and Virginia, for instance, have all created Bloomsbury-related works or otherwise taken part in preserving Bloomsbury sites and commemorating its members.[10] Peripheral Group member Frances Partridge was a 'Bloomsberry' for the twenty-first century, still granting interviews in 2001 aged 101.[11] Leonard's nephew, Cecil Woolf, was a keynote speaker at Back to Bloomsbury: the Fourteenth International Conference on Virginia Woolf, held at the University of London in 2004 on the centennial of the Stephens' move to Gordon Square; many conferees commented with glee on Cecil Woolf's marked resemblance to his uncle.

During the centennial conference, Jean Moorcroft Wilson gave walking tours of Virginia Woolf's London. If, as Plate finds, the literary walk is 'a leisure activity reserved to those who have achieved material prosperity and for whom literature is a theatre of memorable experiences', then the 'so-called Bloomsbury industry . . . cannot be thought of as separate from, or outside of, commodity culture' (Plate, 2006, pp. 112, 114). Indeed commodities abound. The Charleston gift shop offers ceramics, jewellery, tapestries, and scarves in colours and patterns inspired by the original Charleston artists, prints of whose paintings are also for sale, along with picture books and videos of Bloomsbury rooms and gardens. As Pierre Nora states, commemoration inevitably becomes 'subject to the overlapping and intersecting influences of the media, the tourist trade, the entertainment industry, and advertising and marketing' (Nora, 1998, p. 615). Silver discusses the market for Woolfiana at length in *Virginia Woolf Icon*.

In Harlem, public spaces more than private homes memorialise the Renaissance, in keeping with its more public beginnings. The 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library, known today as the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, stands as a cornerstone of the Harlem Renaissance's legacy. In the 1920s, the library was a hub of community and literary activity, with white librarian Ernestine Rose spearheading efforts to integrate racially the New York Public Library's staff and membership. Working tirelessly to establish a vibrant, civic-minded space, Rose educated herself and her staff on Harlem's diverse immigrant communities, including African-Americans from the South,

who had 'never been permitted to enter a public library. That they are welcome, and that the place is free, must continually be repeated', Rose stated in 1921 (Rose, 1921, p. 257).

Those on the brink of literary fame also visited the library. Before writing her own fiction, Nella Larsen volunteered at the 135th Street Branch, officially joining its staff in January 1922.[12] Novelist Jessie Fauset volunteered as well. Already the literary editor at *The Crisis*, Fauset found herself uniquely positioned to publish up-and-coming black authors, such as Langston Hughes, who read his work aloud at the library and liked to mingle there with the 'black intelligentsia' (S. Anderson, 2003, 398). Rose soon recognised the growing Harlem literati as crucial to the library's success, wooing the likes of Du Bois for years to keep the library in the public eye and garner much-needed funding. Nor is the 135th Street Branch the only Harlem Renaissance-affiliated library. After a $4 million renovation, the Historic Harlem Library opened in 2004 during Harlem Week's 30th anniversary, complete with a new community room dedicated to Zora Neale Hurston.

The Harlem Renaissance is alive and well in academia too, with courses and conference panels on the topic along with numerous publications, including the two-volume *Encyclopedia of the Harlem Renaissance* (2005), the letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten, and a steady stream of biographies of Harlem Renaissance figures, such as George Hutchinson's *In Search of Nella Larsen: A Biography of the Color Line* (2006). The latest *Norton Anthology of African-American Literature* (2004) added Larsen's novel *Quicksand* (1928) in its entirety, while contemporary African-American works continue to address issues stemming from the Renaissance, such as the use of the black vernacular in African-American literature, a principal theme of Percival Everett's 2001 novel *Erasure*. Large-scale events include the Annual Harlem Renaissance Festival, now in its seventh year, showcasing African-American literature, music, dance and food, and hosting round-table discussions on topics important to today's African-American communities.

As Virginia Woolf reigns in the Bloomsbury industry, Zora Neale Hurston holds sway in that of the Harlem Renaissance. In 2003 her alma mater, Barnard College, celebrated her with a day of events and speakers, while in the same year, the United States Postal Service commissioned a stamp in her honour. The Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts in Eatonville, Florida, hosts an annual festival in her honour, and the latest Hurston biography, *Speak, So You Can Speak Again: The Life of Zora Neale Hurston* (2004), by one of her nieces, contains a multi-media array of materials to delight Hurston devotees: dozens of photographs,

previously unpublished poems, a map of Eatonville, reproductions of letters and hand-made painted cards, Hurston's dictionary of Harlem slang, and a facsimile of the first hand-written page of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. One sheet of paper in the biography appears charred along its edges, representing part of a burning manuscript pulled from Hurston's last Florida home. The *pièce de résistance* is an audio CD featuring a 1943 interview with Hurston and her presentation of folk materials to the Works Progress Administration and Library of Congress in 1939. The book's format attests to readers' desire for a tactile experience of authors and literature.

Beyond the conferences, publications and festivals lie larger issues regarding the legacies of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance. Briggs considers whether pacifism in England might have hindered Britain's arms build-up, for instance, noting that even committed pacifists like Leonard came 'to recognize the necessity of rearming against Hitler' (Briggs, 2005, p. 315). Given America's volatile racial climate during and after the Harlem Renaissance, Du Bois's faith in reason also seems sorely misplaced, as do Hurston's repeated declarations that black America was doing just fine on its own. Subsequent African-American literature – protest novels of the 1940s and 50s and radical tracts of the 1960s Black Arts Movement – disdained the Harlem Renaissance for sugar-coating racism and pandering to whites. Hindsight addresses concerns paramount to both groups: when, whether and how to unite politics and art, as well as the pressure of public sentiment upon such efforts.

Notions of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance continue to shift and change. Brenda Silver's assessment of Woolf as 'between high culture and popular culture, art and politics, masculinity and femininity, head and body, intellect and sexuality' is well-suited to the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance, for we now recognise the extent to which each group, and group member, defies easy categorisation (Silver, 1999, p. 11). As Hussey notes, 'the problems of determining who was or was not in the Bloomsbury Group have long since given way to arguments with more serious implications for the relations between aesthetics and politics, art and society' (Hussey, 1995, p. 38). Current Harlem Renaissance scholarship similarly subordinates debate over whether the Renaissance 'succeeded' or 'failed' for deeper investigations of African-American literary consciousness in the early twentieth century.

We can mine rich materials from comparative studies of the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance, exploring the role of female publishers in the early twentieth century (Woolf at the Hogarth

Press and Fauset at *The Crisis*); the fear and disdain of literary elitism (the Bloomsbury "clique" and the Talented Tenth); the memoirs and fictional accounts of each group (those that deconstruct or reinforce stereotype and aura); or the methodology for delineating literary groups and activities, revealing as much about contemporary values as about the groups themselves. As McVicker believes, 'we as critical readers must continually keep in mind that a writer's textual practices cannot be separated from other competing historical discourses' (McVicker, 1994, p. 314). Let us reconceive modernism, then, considering the Bloomsbury Group and the Harlem Renaissance together to challenge the binaries often imposed on literary studies and establish a more comprehensive modernism overall.

Notes

1. *MB*, p. 195.
2. Some consider the Harlem Renaissance to have begun with an earlier march down Fifth Avenue – that of 1917, when 10,000 African Americans united in peaceful protest of atrocities committed against blacks in America (Meacham, 2004, p. 751). Also see Wall, 1995, pp. 9–12 and Hughes, 1940, p. 1325 for competing views on the Harlem Renaissance's origins.
3. Poole, for one, states, 'There was very little in the way of beliefs or doctrines for the members of early Bloomsbury' (Poole, 1989, p. 960).
4. Froula alludes to Williams' summation of Bloomsbury as 'a new *style*' (see Froula, 2005, p. 4 and Williams, 1980, p. 234).
5. For her play *The Great Day*, Hurston cast 'a fine black girl as a contralto soloist, and a lovely black girl as soprano. This baritone is a dark brown also. No mulattoes at all' (Hurston, 2002, p. 233).
6. The 21 March 1924 *Opportunity* awards dinner is also considered to have launched the Harlem Renaissance. See Boyd, 2003, p. 395.
7. Marshik discusses the little-known fact of *Orlando's* brush with censorship (Marshik, 2006, pp. 117–18); see Froula, 2005, on Woolf's self-censorship.
8. Lewis, 1981, p. 284.
9. 'Black unemployment was as much as three times higher than it was for whites' during the Depression, Kaplan notes (Kaplan, 2002, p. 161). It was five times higher in Harlem, with 'Harlem's median family income plummet[ing] 43.6 percent during the Depression's first three years' (Boyd, 2003, p. 218). As Lewis explains, 'throughout the Depression, rentals above 125th Street would range $12 to $30 a month higher than the rest of Manhattan. Harlem the ghetto was becoming Harlem the slum, the upward movement of its inhabitants pathetically slowing where it did not, as was generally the case, reverse itself' (Lewis, 1981, p. 240).
10. The Virginia Woolf Memorial in Tavistock Square was unveiled at the 2004 International Conference on Virginia Woolf, with Olivier Bell present for the occasion. Several groups are petitioning to keep Godrevy's light from being

switched off and are opposing plans to develop the land around Talland House. See the International Virginia Woolf Society website, http://www.utoronto.ca/IVWS/, for details.

11. Frances was married to Ralph Partridge, who worked with the Woolfs at the Hogarth Press in 1923.
12. S. Anderson, 2003, p. 394.

12

Sketches of Carlyle's House by Two Visitors, a Young Virginia Woolf and a Japanese Novelist, Sōseki Natsume

Makiko Minow-Pinkney

Woolf visited Carlyle's house at least four times in her lifetime – 1897, 1898, 1909 and 1931. "Carlyle's House", a brief sketch of her third visit on 23 February 1909, was published for the first time in 2003 in *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches*. Sōseki Natsume visited the house on 3 August 1901 during the time he lived in London for over two years and wrote a piece entitled "The Carlyle Museum", one of his earliest published works.[1] Both authors began their literary careers during the same period. Woolf's first review essays were published in December 1904. Sōseki's first publication appeared in January 1905. They never knew each other, and their backgrounds and circumstances were vastly different: a young, middle-class English woman and daughter of Carlyle's friend, and a Japanese lecturer of English Literature studying in London for the time, who described his two years in London as 'the most unpleasant years in [his] life', living in misery, 'like a poor dog that had wandered into the company of wolves' (Sōseki, 1975, p. 14). There is no question of direct or indirect influences between them. The closest point of their never crossing paths is their visits to Carlyle's House; it seems they were both received by the same custodian, Mrs Strong. My point of juxtaposing two texts by these two writers, despite the apparent lack of relationship, is that, put together as a responses to the nineteenth century, they shed new light on understandings of modernism and the literary past it tried to repudiate.

Thomas Carlyle was often dubbed a 'great man', but was he a moralist, a social critic, a historian, a literary figure? His historical approach and style make his writing less like a historian's than a literary writer's. Woolf's father referred to Carlyle as 'the acknowledged head of English literature' (Stephen, 1921–22, p. 1033). In Japan, to which Carlyle was introduced in the 1880s, he was more often regarded as a literary figure.

Sōseki recognised Carlyle as a literary writer and essayist; in a school essay, Sōseki wrote about his dream of meeting Carlyle 'the great essayist'. Already warned by his teacher not to imitate Carlyle, Sōseki was also told by Carlyle himself that there is no use in trying to imitate his 'un-English' style.[2] Whether the content of this dream is fictional or not, it certainly indicates that Sōseki had a strong interest in Carlyle, even harbouring a desire to emulate his writing. In her younger years, Woolf had interests in historical writing, and it is not surprising that she turned to Carlyle. Woolf writes in her diary that she used to 'read masses of Carlyle' (*D*2, p. 310). So both Woolf and Sōseki had a considerable interest in and knowledge of Carlyle long before their visits to Carlyle's House.

The focus of the texts by Woolf and Sōseki differ; however they both express their strong sense of the artificially-preserved nature of Carlyle's house. The deliberately-ensured permanence paradoxically emphasises the ephemerality of human life and the deadness and 'past-ness' of the place dissociated from the ever-changing flux of life. Woolf's text is concerned with Carlyle's wife, Jane, and sees the house in terms of the couple's marital relationship. Placed in the particular context of Woolf's life at that time, "Carlyle's House" points to Woolf's future development as a modernist and feminist writer. As I go on to explore below, the subtleties of Woolf's gendered reading of the Carlyles' house informs her understandings of sexual politics generally, and specifically of the couple who dwelt in that house. The narrator of Sōseki's "The Carlyle Museum" tries to empathetically imagine the domestic life of Carlyle-the-man rather than the formidable, righteous intellect and critic of the age. Sōseki felt a certain affinity with him not only because of his intellectual stance – his denunciation of a capitalist society brought by industrialisation with materialism as its hallmark – but also the raw nerves and over-sensitivity behind his robust image as a man of fortitude and tenacity. In "The Carlyle Museum" Sōseki's marks his own discursive space by eschewing 'Western' narrative conventions, which was synonymous with 'modern' discursive practice; Japanese writers of that time were under the pressure of the nation's mission to modernise (Westernise) their work. Interestingly, Sōseki's text resembles modernist experimental writing, and if Sōseki had been known to the West then, he might have been an inspiration to would-be modernist writers, just as Japanese woodcut printers were to the Impressionist and Post-impressionist painters.

One apparent motive for Woolf's 1909 visit to Carlyle's house was to prepare for a review of *The Love Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle*

for the *TLS*. In 1904, in one of her first published writings, "Howarth, November 1904", Woolf was sceptical of the value of 'pilgrimages to the shrines of famous men' except as

> sentimental journeys. It is better to read Carlyle in your own study chair than to visit the sound-proof room and pore over the manuscripts at Chelsea . . . The curiosity is only legitimate when the house of a great writer . . . adds something to our understanding of his books. (*E*1, p. 5)

Woolf knew the Carlyle's house already, having been there twice when she was a child. So what did she expect to find there on her third visit? 'I don't know', she writes, 'something at any rate less cold, and formal' (*CH*, p. 3). In the published review of *The Love Letters* she laments: 'How shall we, when "ink-words" are all that we have, attempt to make them explain the relationship between two such people?' (*E*1, p. 261). Perhaps Woolf went to Carlyle's house hoping to find something which could add to her understanding of the ink-words of their love letters. There was perhaps another reason which made Woolf wish for an insight into the relationship of this famous couple, making her visit their house particularly meaningful and even necessary.

David Bradshaw, the editor of the sketch, draws attention to the fact that only six days before this visit, Lytton Strachey had proposed to Virginia – the proposal was accepted but mutually withdrawn almost immediately. Pointing to Hermione Lee's suggestion that Virginia's review of *The Love Letters* can be read 'as a continuation' of her conversation about marriage with Strachey (Lee, 1996, p. 260), Bradshaw highlights this fact when contextualising her visit to Carlyle's house. It is tempting to make links between Virginia's reading of the Carlyles' *Love Letters* and the Woolf–Strachey fiasco, and speculate on what role the volume might have played in their short, failed engagement. In her review of *The Love Letters* Woolf writes: 'It was his intellect that she admired, and it was her intellect that she would have him admire' (*E*1, p. 258). What hopes might Woolf have entertained when, perhaps, drawing parallels between the Carlyles' relationship and her relationship with Strachey? What possible disaster might she have foreseen when she began to witness the sexual politics between Carlyle and Jane, allowing his 'genius' to claim Jane as if it were his natural right? Woolf writes in the review of *The Love Letters*: 'It became obvious that if she [Jane] ever married him she would have to adapt herself to fit it . . . If she hesitated, it was because she realised the sacrifice' (*E*1, p. 260). Woolf also writes in the review: 'It

is true that she hesitated, said that she was not in "love" with him, and could imagine a love that swept through her like a torrent' (*E*1, p. 260). Woolf concludes the essay with her view of the Carlyles' marriage as 'a noble tragedy' (*E*1, p. 261). Decades later she could articulate what possible disaster she saw in the proposed marriage with Strachey: 'I should have found him querulous. He would have laid too many ties on me, & repined a little if one had broken free' (*D*1, p. 311); 'Had I married Lytton I should never have written anything . . . He checks & inhibits in the most curious way' (*D*3, p. 273).

Out of the four visits, the visit in 1909 described in the piece seems to have had a defining effect on her impression of this place. In "Great Men's Houses", written more than two decades later in 1932, she claims 'the season of the house . . . seems to be always the month of February, when cold and fog are in the street and torches flare and the rattle of wheels grows suddenly loud and dies away'(*LS*, p. 24). The actual month in which she saw the house on the fourth visit, prior to this essay, was March but she visited the house in February 1909 and it seems the overall impression then – the weather, the atmosphere and perhaps her own sentiment too – had a decisive and lasting impact upon her view of the place. Contrary to her earlier scepticism in the 1904 article about the merit of pilgrimages to houses of famous people, in 1932 Woolf is much more positive about the advantages of seeing the places oneself: 'Take the Carlyles, for instance. One hour spent in 5 Cheyne Row will tell us more about them and their lives than we can learn from all the biographies' (*LS*, p. 23). Woolf is certainly able to learn a great deal about the lives of and relationship between the Carlyles as a result of her many visits to the house.

A seemingly minor point that Woolf makes concerning the life of the Carlyles is the glaring fact 'of incalculable importance' which one notices 'in two seconds' if one goes down into the kitchen but which biographers miss – that 'they had no water laid' (*LS*, p. 23). A gendered perspective is subtly presented here: the male biographers' blindness to aspects of everyday domestic life and modern conveniences. However, perhaps her female readers might have picked up on this mundane, but important point; the article was originally published in the magazine *Good Housekeeping*, which would have attracted a larger female readership. Woolf imagines life in Carlyles' house from this crucial double absence – that of 'all modern conveniences and indoor sanitation' (*LS*, p. 26), and that this fact is absent from all the biographies. 'Number 5 Cheyne Row is not so much a dwelling-place as a battlefield – the scene of labour, effort and perpetual struggle' (*LS*, p. 25). The battle which

Woolf sees is women's. The battle within the great man's house is not his own to write and think in quiet in his infamous sound-proofed room, vexed by innumerable noises invading from the surrounding world, but rather that of the mistress's and maid's 'incessant battle' against dirt and cold when keeping the house for genius and master (*LS*, p. 24). For Woolf, this famous couple's site of domesticity quickly turns into a testimony of the nature of their marital relationship, and relationships between men and women in general. 'Few of the spoils of life' preserved there tell us 'that the battle was worth the effort', and Woolf wonders: 'at what cost had she won it!' (*LS*, p. 25). The cost was Jane Welsh Carlyle's genius and intellectual life, as Jane herself had clearly foreseen when she got married. Jane's hesitation was right; to Woolf's female eyes her ensuing sacrifice was too apparent in the house.

Such a reading of Carlyle's house from a female point-of-view in the 1932 article can be traced more than two decades back to the text of 1909 written at the time when she was writing her review of *The Love Letters*. In this brief piece it is Jane's life, not Carlyle's, that Woolf's imagination dwells on in the house, which is 'a silent place, which it needs much imagination to set alive again' (*CH*, pp. 4).[3] Looking for a clue to Jane Carlyle's true nature, Woolf studies her portraits and takes note of her eyes' 'peculiar expression, of humour and melancholy lying dormant, which produces this quizzical look' (*CH*, pp. 3–4). The eyes seem capable of both passion and tenderness, but Woolf decides 'mockery' must have been a dominant expression 'with a background of pathos' (*CH*, p. 4). She concludes that in spite of the brilliant eyes, 'with warmth and depth in them', it is 'an unhappy face' (*CH*, p. 4). Woolf also takes notice of the 'horrid' 'hollow of the cheeks' and 'length of the upper lip' exaggerated in her late photographs, and hints at a rather disturbing association with a dead body by describing her face in the photographs as 'granulated skin tight stretched over a skull' (*CH*, p. 4). Perhaps it is justifiable if we start to feel it is disconcertingly ambiguous whether or not this overall lifelessness, lack of warmth and naturalness, frozen rigidity (even a hint of association with rigor mortis) and desolate and gloomy coldness (the season of the house being 'the month of February') derive from the artificial nature of the place – private space 'forcibly preserved' for the public to view (*CH*, p. 3). Does this indicate something of Jane Welsh Carlyle's personality or the nature of the marriage or both? Or is it indeed more to do with Woolf's own subjective perception, reflecting her own sentiment?

Woolf, after making up a scene of the couple's life together in her imagination, ends "Carlyle's House" by asking: 'Did one always

feel a coldness between them? The only connection the flash of the intellect. I imagine so' (*CH*, p. 4). It is easy to suppose that Woolf is projecting her own personal debate on the idea of marriage throughout the essay, as well as expressing more generally the emerging feminist perspectives in her writing. "Carlyle's House" was written in 1909, when she had already been struggling to write her first novel, and not long before she would assert that in December 1910 human character changed and everything else with it. For Woolf, 'the married life of the Carlyles' appear to epitomise an obsolete Victorian way of life: 'the waste, the futility, for him and for her, of the horrible domestic tradition which made it seemly for a woman of genius to spend her time chasing beetles, scouring saucepans, instead of writing books' (*CE*, p. 320). Tired of spinsterhood and desperate for marriage at the age of 27, Woolf must have found her prospects very grim as a woman with intellectual desire and writing ambitions. In the midst of uncertainty, anxiety and confusion made particularly acute by the recent fiasco with Strachey, Woolf was groping for an answer, a solution which would show her a way out of the nineteenth century.[4] She was seeking a vision for a new kind of human relationship, particularly between wife and husband, as did the heroine of the novel which she had been writing for two years by then and would be published as *The Voyage Out* in 1917. One can argue that visiting Carlyle's house both influenced Woolf's feminist imagination and informed the new directions she might take as a young writer, something that can be said of Sōseki as well.

After returning to Japan, Sōseki wrote "The Carlyle Museum" which expresses his experience of visiting the house as a young writer; it was published in 1905. Although it has a casual, travelogue-like tone, it is a carefully constructed piece of writing, with interesting fictional elements. Like Woolf's "Carlyle's House", Sōseki's piece can be called a 'sketch', though not quite in the same sense. Woolf's piece has been called a sketch based on the fact that it was a short piece (written in 1909) and turned out to be a preliminary work to "Great Men's Houses" (published in 1932). Sōseki was engaged in what he calls 'sketching', which is the translation of the Japanese word *Shasei*. This concept was an essential compositional technique for modern practitioners of poetry in the tanka and haiku forms. Sōseki was deeply involved in his close friend Masaoka Shiki's poetic movement which promoted this technique. The literal meaning of *Shasei* is 'copying life' and the main thrust of the word is to draw or write from nature, copying it as it is. Though this may sound similar to realism, it is not, with the emphasis on 'as it is', meaning 'without elaborate reconstructive efforts' (Sōseki, 1988,

pp. 309–10). In fact, the whole point of *shasei*, particularly for Sōseki, is the rejection of the realist manner of writing, which I discuss below.

One significant characteristic of 'sketching writing' is that it is written in the present tense. It is not impossible to imagine that Sōseki gained an idea of using the present tense for recounting past events from Carlyle's writing. Carlyle's historical account goes against the grain of the modern historians in many respects, even in his own time when scientific positivist approaches were becoming dominant. His reliance on recollections and memoirs rather than primary sources and his rhetorical account makes his work appear to be more impressionistic. According to Alan Shelton, Carlyle's strength as a historical writer is his 'capacity to immerse himself totally in his subject-matter' and 'a compelling narrative power' (Carlyle, 1971, p. 113), which enables him to present historical events evolving with immediacy and vividness. His use of stylistic device of the historical present enhances this effect. His writing is also characterised by its emotive style, ironies, the use of exclamation marks and shifting points of view. As mentioned above, Sōseki seems to have had a desire to emulate Carlyle's 'un-English' style from a young age. In "The Carlyle Museum", the narrative 'I' tells the experience of visiting the house in the present tense after he recounts in the normal past tense, that

> I crossed the bridge and knocked at the door of this famous hermitage . . . And now here I am standing on the stone steps of this square edifice and lifting up the knocker in the image of an ogre. A few moments later, a corpulent woman of some fifty years of age makes her appearance and bids me enter. (Sōseki, 2002, pp. 122–3)

This continues to the penultimate paragraph of the text. Reaching the end of the tour of the house, the last paragraph reverts to the past tense:

> To reward the good lady for her trouble, I placed a coin in her hand. Her thanks again sounded recited. An hour later, the London dust, the soot, the rumble of the cabs and the Thames separated me from Carlyle's house, which had become as distant as another world. (Sōseki, 2002, p. 132)

The visit to the fog-bound spot of Chelsea where Carlyle lived is narrated in the present tense until the narrator is again separated from this 'other world'. So the narrator's experience of the past world described

in the present tense is framed by the 'normal' past tense narration of the two actions in the narrative present: 'I crossed the bridge . . . ' and 'I placed a coin . . . '. One explanation for this paradoxical use of tense could be that it intensifies the vivid presence of the past as in Carlyle's use of the historical present. This is only partially true however. The meaning of Sōseki's avoidance of the past tense goes deeper than this descriptive effect.

This anomaly in narrative tense causes some uneasiness in the reader who is accustomed to the Western narrative convention. This convention is so deeply ingrained that one of the English translations starts to ignore or forget the tense of the original text after a while, by replacing it with the usual past tense. Another version uses the present tense to the very end, which is also not faithful to the original, where the last paragraph is in the past tense as mentioned above.[5] It is Roland Barthes who identified the past tense (the preterite in French), together with the third person, as the most significant marker of the Western art of the novel and disclosed its ideological assumptions. In *Writing Degree Zero*, Barthes argues that the past tense is an operative sign 'whereby the narrator reduces the exploded reality to a slim and pure logos, without density, without volume, without spread' (Barthes, 1968, p. 30). The past tense 'presupposes a world which is constructed, elaborated, self-sufficient, reduced to significant lines' (Barthes, 1968, p. 30). Sōseki's writing in the present tense deprives the reader of such a reference point, a point from which the past is reconstructed, from which our sprawling existential expanse is put in a containing perspective and multiple experiences are synthesised into a comprehensible totality. So according to Sōseki, 'sketching writing' is often plotless, because 'Life has no plot' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 310). Sōseki was aware that '[p]lot is the foremost necessity for the novel' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 310) and challenges the very form of the novel through sketching writing. In other words, Sōseki's rejection of the past tense is the refusal of the subject position foundational to the Western narrative, what Julia Kristeva calls the 'thetic subject'.[6]

Barthes refers to certain forms of Chinese art whose different traditions strive to express the perfection with which reality is imitated, when the distinctions between the natural and artificial objects disappear and relinquish any signs indicating the existence of the artifice and the origin of the artificial objects. In contrast to such an aesthetic tradition, the narrative past of the Western novel, by marking the position of this thetic subject of the artist, is constantly pointing to the artifice, to the fact that the work is a *re*construction, not a construction

of reality, *re*presentation, not presentation. So Barthes contends that the past tense 'is the cornerstone of Narration, always signifies the presence of Art' (Barthes, 1968, p. 30). But if Sōseki avoids the past tense, and therefore the thetic position (the basis of signification in the Western tradition), where does his writing come from? Who is narrating?

In his essay "*Shaseibun*" ["Sketching Writing"] (1907), Sōseki identifies a certain 'psychological disposition' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 304) as its distinct characteristic. That is, the attitude of the writer of sketching toward human affairs, including those concerning oneself, is that 'of a parent toward a child' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 305). This mental disposition, Sōseki emphasises, 'derives from Haiku poetry'; 'it is not a Western import' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 310). It takes a detached attitude toward world affairs, but it is neither cold nor lacking in compassion; it is not self-abandoning sympathy – 'asympathy' as Sōseki calls it. From such a detached attitude 'the quality of humour emerges' (Sōseki, 1988, p. 307) because the narrator is viewing world affairs with better understanding instead of getting lost in misery and unhappiness, just as the adult can do with the child's frustration. And, indeed, the narration of "The Carlyle's Museum" is subtly humorous. Such detachment also means that the writing of sketching never lodges itself in the deep interior of the character, including the author's self. An omniscient realist narrator who is ambiguously fused with the author's self and the character is impossible here; sketching writing would be 'objective' and have a distinct narrator (Sōseki, 1988, p. 308). The narrative 'I' of "The Carlyle Museum" becomes separate, a kind of alter ego of the writer. That the writer's self merges with Carlyle through empathy is observed by this narrative 'I' with detachment, but warmly and with humour.

Freud's theory on humour is unexpectedly illuminating here because the characteristic mental disposition of the sketching-writer is almost identical to what Freud defines as a person's humorous attitude.[7] A humorous attitude occurs when 'the subject is behaving towards [others] as an adult does towards a child when he recognises and smiles at the triviality of interests and sufferings which seem so great to it' (Freud, 1990, p. 430).[8] But Freud reminds us of 'the other, probably more primary and important, situation of humour, in which a person adopts a humorous attitude towards himself in order to ward off possible suffering' (Freud, 1990, p. 430), because the main intention of humour resides in such a defensive function: to console the intimidated ego, to protect it from suffering, 'enabling the ego to obtain a small yield of pleasure' by 'repudiating reality and serving an illusion' (Freud, 1990, p. 432); hence our (the ego's) sensation of 'something of grandeur

and elevation' (Freud, 1990, p. 428) which is lacking from the effect of jokes and the comic. What is the exact psychic mechanism by which a humorous attitude brings this effect? To explain this, Freud hypothesises a displacement of large amounts of energy from the ego to the super-ego. With this new distribution of energy, the ego, from which the 'psychic accent' is withdrawn, 'appears tiny and all its interests trivial' (Freud, 1990, pp. 430–1) to the now inflated super-ego: 'Look! here is the world, which seems dangerous! It is nothing but a game for children – just worth making a jest about!' (Freud, 1990, p. 433). It is possible for someone to treat him/herself like a child while simultaneously playing the role of adult superior to that child because of the structure of the ego: 'It harbours within it, as its nucleus . . . the super-ego. Sometimes it is merged with the super-ego so that we cannot distinguish between them, whereas in other circumstances it is sharply differentiated from it' (Freud, 1990, p. 430). While a joke is the contribution made to the comic by the unconscious, 'humour would be the contribution made to the comic through the agency of the super-ego' (Freud, 1990, p. 432). So the two features – 'the rejection of the claim of reality and the putting through of the pleasure principle' – would 'bring humour near to the regressive or reactionary processes' (Freud, 1990, p. 429).[9] This is somewhat surprising. Such an image of the super-ego which speaks 'kind words of comfort to the intimidated ego' (Freud, 1990, p. 430) accords ill with a punishing, prohibiting severe master, which we have come to understand as the super-ego. Freud defends this new aspect of the super-ego by pointing out: 'if the super-ego tries, by means of humour, to console the ego and protect it from suffering, this does not contradict its origin in the parental agency' (Freud, 1990, p. 433). This simply suggests, Freud admits, that 'we have still a great deal to learn about the nature of the super-ego' (Freud, 1990, p. 433).

In "The Ego and the Id" Freud mentions 'the origin of the ego ideal' (the super-ego) in earliest childhood: 'there lies hidden an individual's first and most important identification, his identification with the father in his own personal history' (Freud, 1991a, p. 370).[10] Identification being 'the earliest and original form of emotional tie' (Freud, 1991b, p. 136), this father, in fact father–mother conglomerate, plays a crucial role in enabling the self to overcome the sadness of separation from the maternal body.[11] This supportive father is not the Oedipal-father, but a loving and lovable one, which Kristeva calls 'the imaginary father'. This imaginary father guarantees 'primary identification', by means of that which is not-yet-the-ego, by imitating this first model of unity, and adumbrates its own unitary identity. In Kristeva's theorisation, this

leads to the 'thetic break', causing the self to separate itself from what is not yet an object, and thus ensures the subject's identity and integration and its entrance to the realm of signification.[12]

According to Freud, reference to time is bound up with the work of consciousness, particularly with the perceptual system.[13] If the super-ego is less firmly connected with consciousness, as Freud considers (Freud, 1991a, p. 367),[14] then it means that it does not have much to do with the concept of time.[15] If in sketching-writing narration comes from the super-ego which is not part of consciousness, it cannot have reference to time. And if the super-ego assumes the kinder character of its archaic form ('a father in the individual's own personal history' or 'the imaginary father') in the regressive processes of humour, it can be assumed that the ego too regresses to its nascent stage where a 'thetic break' is not firmly established yet. Humorous attitudes allow a return to ego as a child. So sketching-writing is devoid of the thetic position which makes it possible for reality to be ordered in a linear and logical coherence from a temporal perspective and narrated in the past tense. For a sketch-writer there is no reconstruction of experience in a temporal order: 'Life has no plot', narration and life concur in the present tense and become indistinguishable from each other.

One rather strange description appears in "The Carlyle Museum" just before the narrator visits Chelsea. As his daily habit goes, the narrator sits down on the bench, we are told, watching thick fog rising on the opposite bank of the river where Carlyle used to live. 'In the end all that is left is an intangible speckled veil lingering in the sky, meeting the gaze like something that has arrived from a far-off world of *the future*' (Sōseki, 2002, p. 120; emphasis added). Then the narrator explains that he always remembers the episode of Carlyle as 'the Sage of Chelsea'. Here for the first time the reader understands that the opening scene with which the text began abruptly and disorientatingly because of its present tense narration was this remembered/imagined episode. It is obviously this image of Carlyle, the social critic and moralist of the past evoked from the fog-bound Chelsea on the opposite bank, that one day made the narrator decide to visit his house, where 'Carlyle is no longer living' and the other interlocutor in the episode of the Sage of Chelsea, 'too, is doubtless dead' (Sōseki, 2002, p. 120). If so, the 'far-off world of the future' is rather peculiar. Why not 'the past'? At the end of the text when the narrator leaves the house, Carlyle's house is relegated to the past 'as distant as another world'. But the experience of this other world is yet to happen at this point in the narration. Hence, from a narrative point of view, the foggy veil shrouding Chelsea is coming from 'a far-off world of the future' even if that is the past world of the dead.

Though not fully demonstrated in "The Carlyle Museum", Sōseki's stylistic virtuosity is well-known. In his first novel *I Am a Cat*, written contemporaneously with "The Carlyle Museum", he deploys diverse styles such as epistolary writing, the style of scientific debate and the feminine dialect of the upper-middle class in the Tokyo area. Such a narrative polyphony derives from Sōseki's deliberate avoidance of a fixed, unitary, thetic subject in writing.[16] This and his rejection of the past tense express the same preoccupation: liberation of writing from the Western novel, refusal to narrow down narrative literature to this one dominant convention, that is to say, the rejection of the kind of subjectivity presumed in the realist narrative and its presupposed worldview, for all of which the use of the past tense is a signifier. Sōseki's greatness is evidenced in that he had understood this half a century before Barthes.

If Sōseki sought to write from a different psychic place, chronologically anterior to the ego/subject (the Western point of view may regard such a position as 'regressive', 'immature' or even 'primitive'), this is not simply the reflection of his individual psychological problem.[17] This issue is concerned with the Japanese literature of that particular historical context. Since 1868 when Japan opened its country to the outside world, the nation had been making strenuous efforts to modernise, i.e. Westernise. In the field of literature too, in order to achieve modernity, writers had been endeavouring to emulate Western novel writing. This was not simply the question of adopting a certain style. The task started with the reformation called *genbunitch* movement – the unification of spoken (*gen*) and written (*bun*) languages. This really meant the insertion into Japanese discursive practice of a certain ideology of writing, in other words, the Western metaphysics of presence as revealed by Jacques Derrida, and the notion of the interiority of subject. In order to be able to write novels, Japanese writers had to acquire this 'interiority' postulated by the Western novel but unknown to them.[18] By the time Sōseki started his career as a novelist in 1905, most Japanese writers, having accomplished the task, were writing in the manner of Western realism. Sōseki resisted this dominant trend of the Japanese literary world. One of his earliest published works, "The Carlyle Museum" demonstrates Sōseki's rejection of realist writing and his attempt at an alternative practice.[19]

In the preface of *A Passionate Apprentice* Hermione Lee argues that Woolf's early journals are important, even though they are 'pencil sketches' rather than accomplished works, because through them 'begins to come the sense . . . that the sketch-like methods of the

journals themselves will be able to be quarried for a new kind of fiction' (*PA*, p. xiii). This moment – of Virginia Stephen becoming the novelist Virginia Woolf – arrives, according to Lee, when 'she thinks about the subjectivity of descriptive writing – "What one records is really the state of one's own mind"' (*PA*, p. xiii). Here is a moment of doubt about realist objective description, the moment close to the birth of a modernist who is suspicious of the narrativity which shapes the outside world. Woolf expresses her wish to 'discover real things beneath the show' by writing 'not only with the eyes but with the mind' (*PA*, p. xiii). Realism pretends that it is made possible by pure observation of objects, as if writing 'only with the eyes' were possible without admitting any involvement of the materiality of language or the mind of the observer. To become conscious of the connection between subject, object and language cannot but lead to a serious questioning of realism. Woolf would soon discover, however, that 'the mind' itself was suspicious. The link between subjectivity and objective description, obscured in the realist narrative, is what Barthes exposed: there is no 'writing degree zero'. Kōjin Karatani argues in *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* that it is the existence of internal subjectivity that makes the external world emerge, and in this sense the question concerning the objective description of realism should be addressed in terms of the assumed subjectivity. Woolf, who found subjectivity in objective description, was soon to find that subjectivity was ineradicably positioned by gender.

The move from 22 Hyde Park Gate to 46 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury in 1904 brought Woolf momentous liberation from Victorianism on many fronts of her life. But perhaps this geographical, intellectual and psychological move to Bloomsbury was still not enough to make her discover that the mind could not be free from every constraint, as the Bloomsbury group seemed to be making themselves believe. The bungled engagement with Lytton Strachey – a possible case of another 'noble tragedy' like the Carlyles' – perhaps made her realise how deeply the mind was entrenched in sexual politics within an individual relationship, even among the intellectually liberated. Woolf's shift of interest from Thomas Carlyle – her father's pedagogical choice – to his wife, Jane, evidenced in the sketch and her letters written around that period,[20] seems to mark the moment of this realisation. As Lee sees in Woolf's early journals, the sketch points to one of the moments of Virginia Stephen moving from being a late-Victorian with 'no signs at all of a budding modernist' and 'strong nineteenth-century influences – Tennyson, Macauley, Carlyle' (*PA*, p. xii) to being not only an experimental modernist novelist but also the feminist writer we recognise and admire today.

By the time of her visit to Carlyle's house, Woolf had been working for two years on her first novel which would become *The Voyage Out*. The novel evidences her confusion and anxiety as a woman and a writer, and searches for the possibility of a desirable subjecthood for a woman artist. This search never ceased throughout her life; it continued to be her main literary concern to write from a different subject position than the established masculine one. And yet even *To the Lighthouse,* about which Woolf expressed her satisfaction that she 'made [her] method perfect' (*D*3, p. 117), retains what Barthes defines as 'the cornerstone of Narration' (Barthes, 1968, p. 30): past tense and third person. The feat of her style in her acclaimed modernist texts such as *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* consists in the dexterous double manoeuvre of dissolving and assembling the subject of writing. Though in the bare minimum, this narrative convention persists even in *The Waves* in which Woolf furthered her experimentalism more daringly: the past tense, third person writing (' . . . said Rhoda', ' . . . said Bernard') still frames the present-tense direct monologues of the characters and the novel ends with Bernard narrating the summing up story in the past tense. Once in a child's play of imaginary exploration, Bernard 'sinks through the green air of the leaves' (*TW*, p. 16) to Elvedon and there he sees the gardeners sweeping and the lady writing. Is it the scene of a fictional character coming to confront his author-narrator (Woolf) writing the story of him and the other characters? Bernard finds himself powerless to 'interfere with' the gardeners sweeping or the woman writing (*TW*, p. 241). His imaginative power cannot 'dislodge' them, proving 'these presences' are more powerful than fictional existence; 'there they have remained all my life' (*TW*, p. 241). So long as he is a fictional character, his existence is dependent on the author-narrator. By this fixity of the woman writing, the text seems to be making a self-reflexive reference to the minimally retained and yet never vanishing point, marked by the past tense and third person, the 'cornerstone of Narration', namely, a fixed point from which a world is reconstructed and narrated, signifying the presence of Art, the thetic subject position of writing, the origin of the text.[21]

Within the Occidental tradition of thought, with the thetic subject as the basis of rationalism and signification, to liquidate the past tense and third person narration would be something unthinkable. Modernism started to search for such an impossible literature, what goes beyond its own world of signification handed down from its past century. However, Woolf, who wrote 'everything in a work of art should be mastered and ordered' (*CE*2, p. 228), might well agree with Kristeva that 'art must not relinquish the thetic even while pulverising it' (Kristeva, 1984,

p. 69). Without it, there would be no art but a mere psychotic dribble. The condition was different for Sōseki who came from the outside of the Western narrative tradition. An issue for Sōseki of repudiating the Western nineteenth century was distinct from the Western modernists' concern with repudiating the nineteenth century, though the results of these two repudiations may resemble each other.[22] It was to retain one's past and reject in order to adopt somebody else's; not going beyond one's inheritance as was the case of the Western modernists. Still not fully inserted into the Western subject, it was just about possible for Sōseki to envisage and practice alternative writing outside the Western discursive space.

Observing from a position on the periphery – Woolf, from a woman's perspective, Sōseki, from a Japanese – these very different novelists-to-be, both at the beginning of their careers, stood inside Carlyle's House. The sketched accounts suggest what Woolf saw and felt then was a first intimation leading to what Woolf later describes as 'a shadow shaped something like the letter "I"' (*AROO*, p. 99). This 'I', though it is 'a most respectable' product of society, 'honest and logical; as hard as a nut, and polished for centuries by good teaching and good feeding' assumes a dominance which turns any otherness as 'shapeless as mist' (*AROO*, p. 99).[23] This is the spectre of the subject, presiding in the tradition of Western discourse, that Woolf wished to avoid. For Sōseki, Carlyle was the intellectual power which tried to repudiate the dominant culture of its own age. It is possible that this great figure – who never stopped scolding the public for its philistinism and whose writing expressed anti-modern ideas in idiosyncratic, 'un-English' style – inspired Sōseki with the determination and courage to face the world, and speak and follow his own motivation to challenge the writing and thought of his time. Each under their own circumstance of social and cultural change, personal turmoil, and gropings for new directions in life and literature, both Woolf and Sōseki questioned the very foundations of the dominant narrative forms and doubted the universality of the kind of subjectivity assumed in those forms. They each embarked on a literary career of practising alternatives to such conventions.

Notes

Quotations from Sōseki's texts (except "The Carlyle Museum") have been translated by Makiko Minow-Pinkney.

1. Sōseki Natsume (1867–1916) was a Japanese novelist. His real name is Kinnosuke Nastume, he is generally known by his pen-name Sōseki. After graduating from university, Sōseki taught at high school before spending two years in England on a Japanese government scholarship. He returned to lecture in English literature at Tokyo Imperial University. After the publication of *I Am a Cat* (1905), Sōseki instantly rose to fame. He resigned from his lectureship at the university in 1908 partly due to health problems (depression), and became a full-time writer for the *Asahi* newspaper and started to write approximately one long novel a year. In addition to fourteen novels, haiku, poems in Chinese style and essays, he wrote *Bungakuron* [A Treatise on Literature], a fruit of his intensive self study in England, in which he attempted to define theoretically a concept of literature. His theoretical approach to literature was unusual in Japan in 1907. He enjoyed enormous popularity and success and is often regarded as the greatest figure in modern Japanese literature. He also became an acknowledged voice-of-the-age, and a popular critic of the indiscriminate adoption of Western cultures.
2. See Shyoko Kanda's "An Essay on 'The Carlyle Museum'" in *East and West in Natsume Sōseki*.
3. In 1905, Woolf had written a review for the *Guardian* on the volume of Jane W. Carlyle's letters, admiring her astute writing and acuity of her observations; so this was the second opportunity given by the *TLS* to pursue her interests in Jane Welsh Carlyle. Even after the publication of the review of *The Love Letters,* Woolf seems to have continued reading and writing about Jane Carlyle. See *Letters* vol. 1 no. 486 and no. 491. Though she wrote that she was going to write an article on her in her letter to Lady Robert (May 1909), no article exists. Woolf published another review essay involving Jane Carlyle in the *TLS* 28 February 1929. See "Geraldine and Jane" in *CE*4, pp. 27–39.
4. As Bradshaw explains, the day before Woolf's visit to Carlyle's House was the fifth anniversary of her father's death. There were family connections between the Carlyles and the Stephens – her uncle Fitzjames Stephen was Carlyle's close friend and Leslie Stephen, also his friend, had been actively involved in the preservation of the house as Chairman of the Carlyle's House Purchase Fund Committee. It is therefore likely that the memory of her father was never far away from her mind during her visit. But I find it difficult to imagine the sentiment of Woolf on the day as being what Bradshaw suggests in his commentary: 'Woolf's journey to Carlyle's House may have been an attempt to reach back to her father – and mother – at a time of emotional upset' (*CH*, pp. 26–7). The well-documented domesticity of the Carlyles bears some resemblance to Woolf's own parents. As Bradshaw also explains, Andrew McNeillie's note to Woolf's review essay of *The Love Letters* points out: 'the Carlyles' marriage was a topic with which the Stephen family were perhaps more familiar than most: "I was not as bad as Carlyle, was I?" being part of the rhetoric on Leslie Stephen's remorseful lips after his own wife's death' (*E*1, p. 261). Bradshaw notes that the word 'granulated' used to describe Jane Carlyle's facial skin in the photographic portraits is the word Woolf uses for her memory of the feeling of her dead mother's face in "Sketch of the Past". It is only our guess what thoughts were on Woolf's mind while looking at Jane Carlyle in the photographs, but if her dead mother's face and Jane Carlyle's momentarily overlapped with each other,

can it be that both the women haunted Woolf as images of a wife exhausted to death by the demands of a dependent husband? When the dependence of 'great men' on women is discussed in *A Room of One's Own*, Carlyle is Woolf's example (see *AROO*, p. 86). I think it is more likely that it is the destructiveness of marriages such as the Carlyles' or her own parents' which was on Woolf's mind on that day as a negative lesson, warning her against such a fate. Woolf might have felt reassured that her decision to abandon the idea of marrying Strachey was the right one.

5. "The Carlyle Museum" translated by Damian Flanagan, published by Peter Owen, 2005.
6. Julia Kristeva uses the term 'thetic' to denote the realm of positions, through which not-yet-subject erects itself as subject, separating itself from the surrounding environment as object. Without such a break, a thetic break, signification cannot be posited. The thetic, which originates in the 'mirror stage' of the individual's psychic development, permits the constitution of the symbolic with all the modalities of logico-semantic articulation. The thetic subject governs the whole tradition of Occidental thought and is the basis of its rationalism. The past tense of realist narrative marks a point which secures such a thetic break. See Kristeva, 1984, pp. 43–5.
7. Kōjin Karatani drew attention to Freud's account of a person's humorous attitude in relation to the sketch-writer's mental disposition; see *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, pp. 183–4.
8. Freud once corrected his previous suggestion of the unconscious part of the ego as the nucleus of the ego (Freud, 1991a, pp. 289–90), by stating that the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* alone can be regarded as the nucleus of the ego (Freud, 1991a, p. 367, n. 2). So when he refers to the super-ego as the nucleus of the ego here again, what he means, is the nucleus in terms of the history of the ego's origins.
9. Freud corrects his earlier idea which ascribes the function of 'reality-testing' to the super-ego (Freud, 1991b, p. 145) and considers reality-testing to be a task of the ego in "The Ego and the Id" (Freud, 1991a, p. 367, n. 2).
10. Freud further explains that it is not the consequence or outcome of an object-cathexis, but a direct and immediate identification and takes place earlier than any object cathexis (Freud, 1991a, p. 370). Earlier he writes: 'At the very beginning, in the individual's primitive oral phase, object-cathexis and identification are no doubt indistinguishable from each other' (Freud, 1991a, p. 368).
11. Freud's footnote reads: 'Perhaps it would be safer to say "with parents"; for before a child has arrived at definite knowledge of the difference between the sexes, the lack of a penis, it does not distinguish in value between its father and its mother . . . In order to simplify my presentation I shall discuss only identification with the father' (Freud, 1991a, p. 370).
12. See Julia Kristeva's *Tales of Love*, pp. 21–41. In the Sixth Virginia Woolf Annual Conference, I discussed 'the Imaginary Father' in relation to Woolf's manic-depressive disposition and argued how crucial the primary identification with the Imaginary Father is for Woolf; its hypercathexis swings her back to the manic position from depression (Minow-Pinkney, 1997).
13. See Vol. 11, pp. 191, 300. Freud suggests the idea that the origin of the concept of time has something to do with the discontinuous method of functioning of the system of perception and consciousness (Freud, 1991a, p. 434).

14. 'Whereas the ego is essentially the representative of the external world of reality, the super-ego stands in contrast to it as the representative of the internal world, of the id' (Freud, 1991a, p. 376).
15. Freud mentions the 'timelessness' of the unconscious at various points in his writings; see the editor's note in "The Unconscious" (Freud, 1991a, p. 191) for detailed references.
16. Joyce's *Ulysses* strikes me as a matching text in this polyphonic writing. The warmth and humour with which Leopold Bloom is presented also seem have a similar quality to Sōseki's.
17. Like Woolf, Sōseki too suffered from several episodes of mental illness in his lifetime, particularly depression. He became seriously ill from depression in London, not surprisingly perhaps when he worked intensively in isolation and under difficult financial conditions because of the meagre governmental provisions for living expenses.
18. Karatani mentions an episode which reveals how treacherously difficult it must have been for the Japanese at the time to achieve this totally new practice and alien concept. Shimei Futabatei, generally regarded as the novelist who wrote the first novel in *Genbunichi* in Japan, attempted to compose his second novel in Russian first which he then translated into the colloquial written style of Japanese, ie. *Genbunichi* in order to improve his unsatisfactory first attempt (Karatani, 1993, p. 51).
19. Karatani argues the reason for Sōseki's immediate and enormous success as a novelist was because he did not write in the way of the modern Western novel; the mass of readers who lagged behind the time had not yet developed a taste for the modern novel. (See Karatani, 1993, p. 176).
20. See no. 486 and no. 491, *Letters* Vol. 1.
21. In the early gestation stage of *The Moths/Waves*, Woolf hit upon a difficult problem to be solved: this question of the position of the writing/narrating subject. If what she wants in *The Moths/Waves* is not 'to tell a story' but '[a] mind thinking' (*D*3, p. 229), she asks herself: 'Who thinks it? And am I outside the thinker?' (*D*3, p. 257).
22. There is a striking image of sky in Sōseki's text in which the narrator observes, sticking his head out of the window: 'Above them like a patient with a sick stomach hangs only a leaden sky stretched indolently as far as the eye can see' (Sōseki 2005, p. 122), reminding us of T. S. Eliot's famous lines in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": 'When the evening is spread out against the sky / Like a patient etherised upon a table'. Sōseki's empathetic identification with Carlyle seems to have found an expression here through the projection of the same physical weakness – a sick stomach – onto the sky.
23. Carlyle may have been a formidable writer who Woolf admired when young, but in *A Room of One's Own* he is the narrator's favourite example of what she calls, with sarcasm, 'great men' of the past, for example see *AROO*, pp. 51–2, 86–7.

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